

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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## MAROONED.

### CHAPTER XXII.

#### THE STRANGE ISLAND.

HOWEVER, as it turned out, the fears which had led me to the handling of my fire-arms, and to my disturbing Miss Grant, proved groundless. The night passed quietly. Mole roused me at eight bells by beating over my head; and when I went on deck I found him as vigilant as need be, the ship sailing quietly along, the watch below turning out, everything as orderly, in short, as though Broadwater still had charge, with Mr. Bothwell at hand as an instrument to drive discipline home.

So it was next day, and so it was next night, and for many days and many nights afterwards. For a whole week together we sailed along without handling a brace or lifting the clews of a royal. To be sure, it was weather to be expected in those parallels. The trade-wind hummed over our quarter, sometimes merrily enough to put an edge of froth to the curl of dark blue ripple; sometimes so softly that I would think we had lost it. The men were very orderly; they kept to their quarters, and never one of them, with the exception of Mole, or the cook, who punctually waited upon us, so much as put a foot upon the companion-steps. They did no work; the decks remained unwashed; what trifling decoration of brass there was

about the vessel grew green; the paint-work became grimy and blotched with heat and neglect; the sailors lounged about the deck all day, smoking and yawning, and then when the cool of the second dog-watch came, they would fill their little tub with punch, dance, sing songs, and fall to the sort of merry-making I have described. The pigs belonging to the brig they killed by degrees, and also made free with the cabin provisions and the live stock; but our own private stores they never offered to touch. Every day, after working out my observations, I would show Mole our position on the chart, but I was careful not to question him. In fact his own and the resolved attitude of the others satisfied me that they had made up their minds, that they had agreed upon a scheme from which nothing was to divert them, and of which it was their intention to keep me in ignorance; and I saw there was no remedy for Miss Grant and myself but patience.

Well, the time passed in this way, one day being the counterpart of another, and the hours seemed as minutes when one looked back, so monotonous it all was, though our consuming expectation and anxiety made the end seem so remote that I would feel sometimes as if I must fall mad from the mere waiting for it. Now and again, but at long intervals, we sighted a sail; but it was always at a distance, and I would bring my eye with a sort

of loathing in me from the gleam of it, so ironical would be its accentuation of our condition, so idle and distracting the yearnings it awoke in me. But one day there came a change of weather. A shift of wind had happened in the morning-watch when I was below, and when I went on deck I found the atmosphere thick, the breeze off the port-bow, and the brig under all plain sail, with the yards braced fore and aft. I made nothing of this at first, for I never doubted that it would brighten out into tropical fairness again in an hour; but finding that it continued, I grew uneasy. For, as I could catch no sight of the sun, there was nothing for it but to depend upon dead-reckoning; and as throughout I had no very profound faith in myself as a navigator, and less faith still in the accuracy of old Broadwater's rusty appliances of aged quadrant and infirm chronometer, I feared that my earlier calculations, supplemented by such guess work as dead-reckoning implies, would find me all adrift when the time came, as I should suppose, to report that Cuba might be looked for in twelve or twenty-four hours. I say I was afraid, for reassuring as might be the behaviour of the men now, it was impossible to foresee what posture they would take if they should find me wrong in my navigation. Indeed my very life might depend upon my accuracy. They would suspect I had wilfully deceived them, and God alone knows what usage I should receive from them if they worked themselves into a passion over this fancy.

The nights were as thick as the days. I never turned out in the dark without an eager look aloft; but the gloom came down to our mastheads; not the leanest phantom of a star was ever visible, and the dawn was again and again the same feeble filtering of granite-coloured light through a sullen grey sky. I told Mole that as the brig was off her course, with a certain amount of leeway to be accounted for, and as I had nothing to

depend upon but the log-line, it would be impossible for me to guarantee that we should hit the Cuba coast. I said this to him at noon on the second day of the thick weather, whilst with quadrant in hand I stood hoping for an apparition of the sun.

He looked at me suspiciously under the mat of hair that drooped upon his brow, and said, "But we ain't outside five days' sail of it, are we?"

"About that," I answered.

"Then how can we fail hitting the island?" he exclaimed. "It's long enough; there's range of coast to keep it in sight if it was as high in the air as the moon is. The brig's head's west by north, half-north, two and a half points off. Our position being known, we shall be able to tell when it is time to go about."

"Ay," said I, "but put her about, and where will she be heading to? South-south-east won't serve our turn, Mr. Mole. Besides, I'm not sure of the currents hereabouts. Captain Broadwater's instruments are not of the best, you must know, and his charts are as old as his quadrant. He had made the run to Rio so often that he could smell his way along; but here am I, no experienced navigator, mind you, heading right away off Broadwater's course, and thrusting into a smother that leaves me nothing but the log-line to work my way by."

I saw he did not like this at all. He eyed me very uneasily, with a shadow of temper rising to his face.

"Should be mere crow-flying work, it seems to me," he exclaimed; "'tain't as if it was a rock you was heading for. Look at the length of the Cuba coast, sir, on the chart. West by south's the course; that's ondoubted, if the compass don't lie. Werry well; you're within five days of a range pretty nigh as long as one side of Europe. How can ye be a-missing of it with the log-a-going every two hours, and the course showing clear in yonder binnacle?"

"As you are so cock-sure," said I, defiantly, "I heartily wish you would

relieve me of the responsibility of navigating the vessel. Since you know all about it, take charge of her! I've done my best, and will resign my trust gladly."

"No, no, by —," he cried, with an oath; "we've kept to our side of the agreement, you keep to yours. You undertook, under conditions which the crew's complied with, to navigate this brig to within a day's sail of Cuba, and then tell us when we were arrived at it. We must hold ye to that, sir," he added, with a dark look.

"What I've done, I've done honestly," said I; "I have been as loyal on my side as I admit the crew have been conscientious on theirs. Use me as you will—I am in your power and cannot help myself, and you know it!—I have performed my share of the cursed compact!" with which I turned on my heel, leaving him standing and following me with his eyes.

Well, for five days and five nights the thick weather lasted. The end then came, very fortunately for me, for had this spell of bitter anxiety been protracted another week, I believe my mind would have become unhinged. The distrust of the men had grown so keen that they watched me as if I were a rattlesnake. Their very ignorance of navigation rendered them the more suspicious. Every day Mole took the chart forward and showed them where we were by dead-reckoning; and you would see them shouldering one another as they looked, flinging a note of growling upon the air with their combined utterances, pointing to the chart with their thumbs, and then gazing around the sea as if there should be something there to furnish them with a hint of the true situation of the brig.

At four o'clock on the morning of the sixth day, when Mole arrived on the quarter-deck to relieve me, the ocean lay as darkly shrouded as it had been at any time since the first of this gloom had gathered around us. The wind had shifted at noon on the previous day, and the course I then shaped

was west-south-west, but at midnight it had headed us again, and the brig had broken off to west by north. Yet the breeze had been steady throughout; we had shown royals to it the whole time, and it had made life as easy-going aboard as ever the steady wafting of the trade-wind had; that is to say, it demanded no pulling and hauling from the men, no furling or setting again. Under a close luff the Iron Crown broke the short gray seas with her larboard bow with a handsome trend to leeward, as was to be noticed by the run of the short streak of oily wake veering away on the quarter.

Mole was grim and surly as an unshaven sailor newly awakened when he arrived. I was not less sullen than he, sick at heart with the four hours' straining of my eyes in search of a star, and weary besides with the fatigue that comes to a man out of anxiety, idle conjecture, and a sense of uncertainty, that in my case was heightened by waiting into a sort of anguish. I briefly and sulkily gave him the news of the four hours, which amounted to nothing, and with a yawn and a shiver went below and to bed.

I was awakened from a deep sleep by a thumping of heavy knuckles on the bulkhead outside. I started up, conceiving I had overslept myself: that it was past the hour, in short, when I should have relieved Mole; but on looking at my watch, which hung at hand, I observed it was but seven o'clock. The knocking was repeated.

"Who's there?" I sang out.

The gruff voice of a seaman named Williamson answered, "Mr. Mole wants ye on deck, sir."

"Right," I answered, jumping out of my bunk, whilst I wondered if some fresh tragedy had happened, for my being called in this way brought the morning of Broadwater's disappearance to my mind, and that was a memory to crowd my imagination with a score of black fears and anticipations. Meanwhile I took notice that the weather had cleared, and that it was a fine

bright morning. The shining of the sunlight upon the scuttle puzzled me. It came full to the glass in a brimming of white splendour off the sea, whereas if we were holding our course the luminary should be nearly astern, with a slanting of his radiance along our sides, out of which no beam could twist to lie as the light now lay in a circular tremble of pale gold upon the door facing the scuttle. Nor could I immediately fail to observe that the brig floated steady. My ear was too practised not to rightly interpret the slopping sounds of water against the run. She rolled slightly, with much internal creaking, as was natural to her; but I did not need to go on deck to gather that either her topsail was to the mast or that her anchor was down.

What had happened? I lingered a minute or two outside my cabin-door, with my ear against the bulkhead of Miss Grant's berth. All was still within. I knocked, then called out gently, "Is it well with you, Miss Grant?"

"Yes; what is it now, Mr. Musgrave?" she replied.

I answered, "I cannot tell. I am now going on deck."

"I will join you shortly," she said.

It was comforting to hear her voice. In such a vessel as the *Iron Crown* it was impossible to know what might happen from hour to hour, and I protest, when I listened and heard no sound in my companion's cabin, such a chill of dismay for an instant fell upon my heart, that the sensation was as bad in its way as the realization of a fear. But all was well with her, and without further lingering I stepped on deck.

It takes a man a little time to collect the details of a picture. For a moment perhaps I stood in the companion-way, looking aloft and upon the decks, and then round upon the sea. The brig, as I had expected to find her, was hove-to. Her mainsail was hauled up, the topsail aback, the royals clewed down. It was a very clear, brilliant

morning. Every vestige of the leaden, oppressive atmosphere that had environed us throughout the week had disappeared. The sea-line ran with a crystalline sheen like the edge of a lens out of the west, carrying the airy, delicate gleam with it in its curvature to the east, where it broke into white flame under the hot and mounting sun.

Directly on our starboard-beam, at the distance of a mile or less, stood an island. The blue went past it on both hands, and the atmospheric hue of the sky beyond was assurance positive to the nautical eye that the ocean was on that side as well as on this. It showed a seaboard of a couple of miles; the foreshore of it apparently coral sand, which to the sunshine dazzled out almost blindingly against the dark green background of bush, tree, and small savanna. Here and there that lustrous beach curved into a little creek with an overhanging of palm-trees on either side of it, like human beings bowing to one another. The breeze was light, there was scarce an undulation of swell, and the thin line of surf crawling out of the blue surface on to the sand came to the eye in a radiant tremble. It was a low island, a Cay, as I might gather, of the true Bahaman type, with a green hammock or two amidships of it; here and there a volcanic-like protuberance of land, with verdant slopes refreshing to the eye to rest upon, and a kind of swarming of trees in places, their tops above the sky-line of the shore, and their branches defining a fibrous conformation as delicate as coral against the liquid azure.

The sailors leaned over the side of the brig, looking at this island. Mole stood gazing at it close to the companion, with his arms folded, manifestly waiting for me to appear. I was a minute however in the hatch before he was sensible of my presence.

"That's not Cuba, sir," he exclaimed, instantly levelling his finger to the island.

At the sound of his voice the fellows



who were hanging over the rail looked round, and two or three of them dismounted and drew near; but merely, as I believed, the better to hear what I had to say, for there was nothing threatening in their manner or faces.

"No," said I, stepping out of the hatch to command a clearer view of the horizon, "that island is assuredly not Cuba, as you say, Mr. Mole. 'Tis a Cay, with a name of its own, I don't doubt. Our drift must have been to the north of west, with a set of current that has thrown me all abroad in my reckonings. I'll step below for the chart."

"Never mind about the chart," he exclaimed, with a note in his voice that brought me to a dead stand in a second; "that island's bekknown to us."

The half-blood Charles came from the rail with his hands in his breeches-pockets. "I know it," he exclaimed, with a peculiar expression in the roll of his sloe-like eyes upon me; "it'll do as well as Cuba—maybe better," he added, speaking the words through his nose with a Yankee drawl.

"What is the island?" I asked.

"It'll be in the West Indie boiling, anyhow," answered the half-blood; "it's all right. No civilization on it; no blasted lawyers to choke a man for doing his messmates a good turn." He whistled softly, with a half-smile at Mole, then swung on his heel and returned to the rail.

Mole eyed me steadfastly, like a man considering; the others, methought, with something of pity mingled with rough curiosity in the air with which they surveyed me. A miserable feeling of uneasiness possessed my mind. Mole's manner was authoritative, and even insolent, a behaviour he had no need to open his mouth to utter. But the others showed a sort of indifference; the men at the rail just looked at me, then resumed their posture of surveying the island; the two or three who had drawn near eyed me, but, as I have said, with curiosity only, for I could witness no malevolence in their regard.

I confess I should have been less scared had the whole of them closed around me on my arrival in a hubbub of savage cries and threats, charging me with having deceived them and the like. This at least would have been consistent with the apprehensions which had almost worn me out during the past week; but the careless, half-composed demeanour they now opposed to me was absolutely terrifying, and I vow 'twas almost a relief to turn from those inquisitive faces, as of those of a crowd in a street staring at some one injured, or in a fit, to the more defined expression on Mole's face, showing sullenly some dark resolution at heart.

I put my hand to my brow and swept the sea-line. It ran without a break to the resplendent shaft of sunlight in its bosom.

"Is this the only island in sight?" I asked.

"Yes," said Mole curtly.

"Ay, but I mean," I exclaimed, "is there no more land visible from the masthead?"

"There's a film away to the west'ards in sight from the cross-trees, that's all," he answered grimly, no longer softening his words with the "sirs" he was used to give me. "We should have been ashore had it held thick. The course ye gave me was dead on end for it."

I glanced at the topsail hollowing backwards to the mast, then at the island, then at him, and said suddenly, "What do you mean to do?"

He fetched a deep breath, and said, "After you and the lady have breakfasted, we'll put ye ashore."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### MAROONED.

ON hearing these words, the men who were standing near us at the bulwarks approached, and looked on and listened; yet they exhibited little more than curiosity in their manner.

"Do I understand," said I, controlling my voice, "that it is your intention to put the lady and me ashore

upon that little island, and leave us there?"

"Yes," he answered, trying to look me full in the face; but his eyes fell to my stare of horror and astonishment.

"Men," I cried, rounding upon the others, "this is hard usage to give a man who has served you as I have. Even though I should have deserved this treatment, what has the lady done to merit it? Her sympathies were with you all from the very hour——"

"For God Almighty's sake, don't argue, Mr. Musgrave," cried Mole, stamping heavily with his foot, and accompanying the gesture by a nervous sweep of his arm. "Our minds are made up. Had yonder island been Cuba, it would have been the same; we'd have set ye both ashore. You and the lady are witnesses we're bound to leave behind us, no matter where. It *must* be done!"

He stamped again. I looked at the half-blood, and was about to address him, but he immediately returned to the rail, and there hung whistling, keeping time by drumming with his fingers.

"Mr. Mole," said I, "it is in your power to give us a better chance for our lives than yonder island will provide. Why do you fear us as witnesses? I am willing to take any oath you and the others may require to keep the events of this voyage secret. Miss Grant will do the same. Put us in the way of reaching some inhabited coast—send us adrift, if you will, within a day's reach of a town, I do not care where it may be—but to land and leave us *there*!" I pointed to the island.

He turned his back upon me, and walked without reply a few steps forward, then turning suddenly and extending his arm, with his great hand clenched, cried out: "Mr. Musgrave, I have begged ye not to argue. It'll do no good. When a man's in hell he's got damnation enough." He swept his hair off his brow, and continued:

"Your breakfast'll be served afore long, and we shall then want you to be ready. She'll carry ye," nodding towards the quarter-boat; "the water's smooth, and you can take what you will that belongs to you. Best bear a hand to get your traps together, for we've got no notion ourselves of hanging hove-to here." He turned his back again upon me, thrust in among four or five men who were at the bulwarks, and stood with them looking at the island.

"Do they mean to set us ashore, Mr. Musgrave?"

Miss Grant was at my side, glancing from the island to around her, with a face in which one saw the first flushing of consternation yielding to a cooler mood even as one watched it.

"Yes," I answered.

"What island is that?" she exclaimed.

"I do not know," I replied.

"Can you not find out?"

"It is doubtless one of the Bahama group, but which it is impossible to say, seeing how wildly wrong I have proved in my reckonings. It is seemingly known to the half-blood, but there is nothing to be got from him or from the others, the merciless villains!"

"Is it inhabited?" she inquired.

"No. If it were I should welcome the act of cruelty as a deliverance from an intolerable situation."

She took me by the arm, and led me a little distance aft out of earshot of the men. Mole peered at us past the rounded back of another fellow, with irritable impatience in his posture of doing so. She viewed the island for a little while without speaking, apparently lost in thought. Her breath came and went tranquilly. The fear that had for a moment or two shone in her eyes being gone, I could not discern the least symptom of alarm in her. I stood silent, marvelling at her composure, wondering indeed whether it did not owe much to her inability to compass what the men's intentions

signified to us. Presently she said quietly, "Will not the chart in the cabin tell us what this island is?"

"I will look when I go below," I replied, but added bitterly, "How should the name of it concern us?"

She interrupted me: "No; but if we can discover its situation, the chart would show us which is the nearest inhabited land, so that we shall know in which direction to steer when we leave that place." I was about to speak. "Oh, Mr. Musgrave," she exclaimed softly, with the faintest tremor in her voice, though her face flushed to the spirit of resolution in her, "I would rather things should be as they are—I would indeed! Our life in this vessel has grown unendurable. My nights are miserable. I can scarcely rest for thought of the plans those fellows there may be hatching. We shall be together on that island; the nightmare of fancy that haunts me of being left alone on this brig—of our being separated through some deed of violence—will be ended. The worst has come, so far as *they* are concerned," she continued, with a shuddering half-turn of her face towards the seamen, "and there at least," directing her glance at the island, "I shall be spared the hundred daily and nightly dreads which terrify me here. It is hard, it is hard!" she muttered in an almost musing way, "but it is less than I feared. They never meant that you should be able to bear witness against the half-blood, against themselves. Some kind of end must have come, Mr. Musgrave. It is miserable as it is; but time after time my terror has foreboded something infinitely worse."

It was afterwards that I recognized the truth of her words; but just then I was so wild and crazed by this blow, by the cold, calculating inhumanity of the men, in whose demeanour I had never witnessed the least hint of such barbarous usage as they were now about to give us, which throughout had been their intention towards us,

and which doubtless was the reason of their demand that I should let them know when we were within a day's sail of the Cuba coast—I say that at that time the conflict of emotions was so violent in me, I could get nothing out of the composure and thoughtful words of the sweet and noble woman at my side but a sort of dull wonder at her tranquillity.

"Your breakfast's gone below, Mr. Musgrave," shouted Mole; "me and my mates 'll be obliged by you and the lady bearing a hand. Another half-hour's as much as we can allow ye."

"Let us go to the cabin," said Miss Grant; "your heart will come to you again soon. I declare I thank God for this thing as a deliverance."

She led the way, and I followed. The cook was lingering at the table, as though adjusting it to his taste, but on our showing ourselves he ran hastily up the steps, fearful perhaps that we should address him. It was not a time to think of eating. For my part, I believe a crumb of biscuit would have sufficed to choke me. In truth, the long hours of bitter anxiety I had suffered had unnerved me; but to what extent I should not have known but for this sudden testing of my courage. I saw Miss Grant look as though she meant to force herself to partake of the meal, to embolden me by a further illustration of her coolness, but she turned away after a minute, and said, "What is next to be done?"

"We must pack up our traps," said I; "we are at liberty to carry our luggage ashore. Ashore! Good God!"

I could scarcely utter the words. You talk of going ashore when newly arrived off a town; or if off a coast, you go ashore to return again to the ship; but to think of going ashore to this little island, to stop there with nothing in sight but a blue streak of haze, visible only from the elevation of the cross-trees—

"Shall we take all we have?" asked Miss Grant, as collectedly, I protest,

as if this Atlantic Ocean were the English Channel, and there was a boat alongside ready to carry us to Plymouth or Dover.

"Yes," I answered, almost mechanically, for this was a detail indeed I found it hard to bend my mind down to; "throw what you have into your boxes and portmanteaux. I will wait for you here."

In five minutes I had stowed my possessions away, and then going to Broadwater's berth, drew a chart of the West India Islands from the bag, and returned with it to the cabin. I hung over it eagerly, but to little purpose. Here was a stretch of islands starting from high abreast of the Florida coast and trending away down to Dominica, and which of them that green and gleaming spot of land out to starboard was, it was hopeless to conjecture. At a later date I might have put my finger upon it without much trouble, but Broadwater's charts were exceedingly old, and this one of the West Indies was complicated and disfigured with ink-marks and dim tracings like a school-boy's lesson-book. However there could be no doubt that this island fringed the thicker zone, that it was some eastward sentinel Cay, such as Rum, Cat, or Watling Island, and that civilization therefore bore from it as the sun set; so that our course, should we make shift to get away, must lie to the west and south.

Whilst I pored upon the chart, the companion was darkened by the figure of a man, and the imperious voice of Mole rang down, "Are ye ready, Mr. Musgrave?"

"I am waiting for the lady," I replied.

I took the chart, and went to the foot of the companion-steps with it. "Mr. Mole," I said, "I have served you as honestly as it was possible to me in the navigation of this brig. It is surely not too much to ask you the name of the island over the side, that I may fix its position here," pointing to the chart, "so as to be able to tell in what

quarter of this bare sea the inhabited lands lie?"

"The name's of no consequence, nor its bearings either," he responded gruffly; "ten to one if it's wrote down on a chart that's brought us up with a round turn leagues and leagues clear of the coast we aimed at. Bear a hand, if you please, sir; the men are growing impatient."

I flung the chart down on the deck. It was a merciful thing I had not armed myself, for I was so mad just then it was as likely as not that I should have drawn upon the ruffian, and paid the penalty by being tossed over the side with a lump of holystone seized to my feet. Miss Grant came out of the cabin.

"I am ready," she exclaimed; "are we expected to carry our luggage on deck?"

I called to Mole, who still stood at the head of the companion-ladder, "You can send a couple of men for the boxes," and so saying, I conducted Miss Grant through the hatch.

They had lowered the boat and brought her alongside under the gangway, that was unshipped with steps over it. A few of the men eyed us askant as though ashamed, yet too curious not to steal a glance. The half-blood was one of these. I thought to myself—"You beauty! Old Broadwater after all had the true gauging of your nature. If ever the gallows were put to a profitable use, it will be when you dangle from it, bleaching to the wind!" I stood with folded arms, my eyes rooted to the deck, Miss Grant by my side, neither of us speaking. Somehow the sense of bitter humiliation, induced by the thought of the sort of men they were who were using us thus, weakened the deep emotion of dismay with which I contemplated our abandonment upon that island. In a few minutes a couple of fellows arrived, bearing our luggage. There were four or five boxes and portmanteaux, along with a carpet-bag or two, some bundles of rugs, a hat-box, and the like; and I cannot express the horrible accentua-

tion these prosaic things gave to our condition when one looked from them to over the rail at the line of white surf melting into the sparkling sand, with the greenery beyond, without a hint even of savage human structure to relieve the spirit of wildness which was swept into the heart of the lonely place out of the infinite ocean distance by the blue line of the horizon going past it on either hand. The two men who had brought the luggage dropped over the side into the boat; the boxes and portmanteaux were handed over.

"Now, sir," said Mole.

I was about to speak. Miss Grant clasped my hand. "Hush!" she whispered, "come!"

Without a word I got over the side and helped her to descend. Suddenly some one cried out, "They're going ashore without anything to eat or drink."

"Vast with that boat, Jim!" shouted Mole.

There was a pause of a few minutes, then what was left of our private stores was passed over, along with a couple of beakers of fresh water and a jar of spirits belonging to the brig. "Shove off!" sung out Mole, "and bear a hand back, lads."

The two fellows threw their oars over, and the little boat, deep with the weight of the provisions, the luggage, and the four people in her, glided shorewards over the blue rippling surface. It happened strangely enough that the two men were of the three (the half-blood being the third) who had pulled us aboard the Iron Crown from Deal. They were both Englishmen, with a ginger-coloured fork of beard, a wrinkled skin, dingy with weather, and covered with knobs like the foot of a sea-boot. They never offered to speak to us, and strenuously avoided meeting our eyes, watching indeed the shearing of their blades through the clear water, as though indeed they were a couple of draper's assistants out for an hour's row. I held Miss Grant's hand, scarce conscious of what I was doing, though I afterwards remembered that she

cherished my hold of it, as though, with a woman's sympathy, she believed I drew courage from the pressure of her fingers, and for that reason let me have my way. Had we been going ashore to some bright town full of life and conveniences, whence in a day or two we should be able to start for Rio, she could not have shown herself more perfectly tranquil and easy. Once she looked behind her at the receding form of the brig, and breathed deep a moment, but the respiration was not a sigh. For my part I never turned my head; my eyes were fixed upon the island we were approaching, but with a feeling of numbness in my mind which rendered curiosity so languid that I gazed as if it were some passing scene in which I had no other concern than that of a spectator.

The men made for the nearest of the creeks, where the tender lift of the summer sea ran foamless to the shadows cast by the leaning trees on either side; the boat's forefoot struck the almost snow-white sand, which went winding up like a silver trail through the herbage, as you notice it on the Mozambique or Natal seaboard, and the sailor in the bows jumped out. The spit of shore that formed the right-hand shoulder of this creek, looking seawards, shelved so flatly to the wash of the surf, that you saw the ocean spreading beyond it to the open sky, with the brig, her topsail still aback, barely leaning from the wind, her canvas and hull dark against the flashing water and the airy splendour beyond her. I threw a look at her now, and thought I could distinguish the tall figure of Mole, watching us through a glass which he steadied against a backstay. The seaman who remained in the boat handed out our luggage and provisions, parcel by parcel, to the other, who dragged or carried them a few yards clear of the water's edge. On this freight being discharged, I went into the bow and stepped ashore, Miss Grant springing easily from the gun-

wale with her hand upon my outstretched arm. My inward rage and despair raised so great an aversion in me to the two sailors, that the mere being addressed by them would have been intolerable, and I was brisk in quitting the boat and in assisting Miss Grant, that they might have no excuse to order us ashore. But I had no sooner felt the ground under my feet than the conviction seized me that we were to be left without a boat! I had not thought of this. My consternation, ever since Mole had apprised me of the intentions of the crew, had been so great that such considerations as had entered my mind were, as I may say, instinctive only; by which I mean, that when a thought occurred to me it was accompanied by a sort of dull notion of its being true. I had—I know not why—reckoned in this mechanical, instinctive way upon our being furnished with a boat; had looked at the chart with that fancy in my mind, and concluded that when we left the island we must steer to the west and to the south; the unconsidered idea in me being that we should be provided with a boat. But now I understood that these men, to return to the brig, must go away with the boat, and that the girl and I were to be marooned to the very height of the meaning of the wild old buccaneering word!

One fellow sat ready to back water; the other, standing in the bows, was in the act of poling the little craft off to get her head seawards. I sprang in a bound to the very lip of the shoaling water.

"My God, men!" I cried, articulating with difficulty, so tremulously was my heart beating, so choking was the sense of constriction in my throat, "you do not mean to leave us here without any means of escaping? Lads, as sailors and Englishmen, show some pity. We are without a refuge!" I cried, almost hysterically, pointing inland; "without tools, without skill to contrive a fabric to escape from this

horrible solitude. Men, as you are English sailors——"

"Shove her off, Bill," growled the fellow in the stern. "Away with us! There's no use talking, and nothen can come of listening."

The boat's head sped round to the thrust of the oar; the two blades dipped—sparkled—dipped again; in a few moments she was clear of the creek, with the two rowers bending to their toil as though they were pulling for a wager.

I walked slowly to where Miss Grant was standing. I think for a little while I must have been off my head, as the common saying goes, for I recollect shaking my fist at the boat and the brig beyond, and heaping fifty curses upon the crew; until exhaustion, combined with the sweltering heat of the sun striking off the white dusty dazzle upon which we stood, came to my rescue and most mercifully silenced me. Miss Grant never spoke, never offered to interrupt or check me. She allowed me to talk myself out, and then taking hold of the sleeve of my coat, quietly drew me to one of the trunks that stood under the shadow of a tree, upon which by a gentle movement of her hand she induced me to sit, and then extracting a little silver-mounted bottle of refreshing scent from her pocket, she damped her handkerchief with it, and held it to my forehead.

I believe, had there been a tear in my composition, my eyes would have distilled it at that moment.

I broke from my spell of womanly weakness with a very passion of resolution.

"I will not ask you to forgive this failure in me," I cried, "heartily ashamed of myself as I am. A little patience, and I shall hope to prove myself worthy of so noble, so courageous a companion as you. I should not have suspected so much weakness in me. I cannot believe it a part of my nature. I have been unduly, most heavily tried. But so have you!" I exclaimed, finding more strength



coming to me out of the clear, serene beauty of her eyes than any cordial could have inspired. "Oh, we will make it well for both of us yet."

I sprang to my feet with a shake of my body that was like flinging away the whole miserable girlishness in me to the winds.

"Nay," she exclaimed, "keep your seat. I will sit by your side. We are not separated yet, Mr. Musgrave. I swear," she cried, lifting her eyes to heaven, "I would rather that this should have happened than that we should have had to endure another week of the horrible life we were leading in that cruel ship. We are not separated; but who knows that another week might not have found us so—might not have found me alone!" She shuddered almost convulsively, then instantly rallying with an effort of will that was a miracle in its way for the energy of it, she added, in a changed, softened voice full of sympathetic sweetness and the melody of her tones, "How refreshing is the shadow of these trees! how soothing this stillness! We shall be able presently to think what is next and best to be done. Let us meanwhile wait and see what they intend to do," pointing to the brig.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### WE VIEW THE ISLAND.

THE boat, creeping along the water with a spark of light to the rise of the oars on either hand of her flashing out as regularly as a revolving lantern, regained the brig, and in a few moments the little fabric mounted jerkingly to the davits; then round swung the topsail-yard, the royals mounted slowly to a taut leech, staysails were run aloft, and as the brig gathered way she fell off a point or two with her head to the east of south, the sea opening beyond her to the clear horizon.

We watched the vessel receding from us in silence; fathom by fathom she crept seawards, with her canvas trem-

bling amid the swimming sultriness of the atmosphere, and a short polished tape as of shot satin dragging in tow of her rudder.

"Distance makes her beautiful," exclaimed Miss Grant, "but she has proved a most ugly ship to us."

"What do they mean to do with her, I wonder!" said I, watching the flickering of her high sails as she drew along a slope of the shore whose shoulder would in a moment or two conceal her.

"What do you suppose?" she asked.

"As they have two good boats," said I, "they will probably scuttle the vessel when within convenient reach of some habitable place. It is clear that they know their whereabouts; and as Mole can use the log-line, the chart will give him the rest of the information he needs. They'll arrive ashore, or be picked up as shipwrecked mariners, earn a deal of pity, pocket some dollars in addition to what they may plunder from Broadwater's and the mate's cabins, then scatter, and never more be heard of. There! She has vanished!" I cried, rising.

I turned to survey the island. It was partly coarse, thick guinea-grass, and partly soft, glittering, dusty sand where we were, with a group of trees winding to the place to which the sailor had dragged our luggage out of a line of palms marshalled for the space of a couple of hundred steps along the shore of the creek, with others opposite, both bending their ostrich-like plumes to a combining of their boughs that formed a little cool green tunnel under which the bright shoaling water ran darkling, though it sparkled out green as emerald in the opening beyond, with a rounding at the extremity like the end of a thumb, where the white sand came down to it. The land went in a slight rise to a grove of trees that was almost a little forest in its way, with a twilight amid the greenery, spiked by hazy beams of sunshine striking down any opening the light could shoot through. Here and there a great red toadstool showed

like a small scarlet shield in the herbage. There was a clump of coconut trees standing isolated to the left of the grove. The white and flowing-like streams of quicksilver wound in paths through the grass in all directions, and made one wonder that the tropical vegetation one saw could take root and find nurture in such soil. The air, blowing softly from the southwest, was tremulous with the humming of many kinds of insects, and sweet with indefinable perfumes as of convolvuli and the passion-flower—a mingling of nameless aromas. I watched a frigate-bird come out from the mere black spot he made seawards, and glance like an arrow without stir of its wide and graceful pinions to some haunt of its own past the little inland forest. In places close beside us the long grass stirred, as though there were human fingers beneath, to the movement of a lizard perhaps green as a bottle, with eyes like rubies, and a flickering fork of tongue as if it was breathing fire; or maybe some dingy thing that might have been a land-crab could be made out creeping for a space through the fibres of the grass, and then falling motionless as though, mole-like, it had sunk deep out of sight.

"I hope there is nothing poisonous in the way of snakes hereabouts," said I, pulling out a stout stick from one of the bundles that lay strapped near a portmanteau, and very warily I strode into the thick of the herbage, beating right and left, keeping a bright look-out, and listening intently. I started nothing but a lizard or two, and one of those half-lobsters called soldiers, and a vast spider with a body as big as a crown-piece, magnificently marked like the leopard, with the hues so brilliant and shining that it was as good as beholding some marvellously wrought mechanism glorious with jewels to watch the scamper of the thing with its long legs over the heads of the spears of grass that bent to its weight. I returned, and, opening my portmanteau, pulled out

the pistols which lay there loaded, and thrust them into my pockets.

"I'll go and take a view of the scene," said I; "there may be land in sight away west from the tallest of those hummocks. This island must form one of the Bahama group certainly, and if so, others cannot be very remote, though hidden from this elevation. Will you remain here until I return?"

"No, I will accompany you," she answered; "there's nothing to be afraid of, yet I do not like the idea of being alone." She sent a swift glance round her with a faint smile that was like asking forgiveness for this little show of weakness.

The length of her dress made me feel a trifle uneasy. It was impossible to know what small murderous fangs lay hidden among the long coarse grass that showed yellow and bald in places to the roasting eye of the sun. The folds of her gown formed such a flowing drapery that the skirts of it trailed a foot or two in her wake—a regular net for the ensnaring of anything venomous or distracting. Let her courage be what it would, methought if she should hook up such a spider as the chap I had just put to flight, it might go hard with us both. It was no time for ceremony. It is simply impossible for a man to be marooned with a girl without the vessel that makes castaways of them carrying off a mass of the superfluous decorums which on shipboard kept them at arm's-length.

"Miss Grant," said I, "excuse me—your dress is too long."

She gathered the folds of it in her hand, and said simply, "Yes, much too long;" then going to one of her trunks she produced, after some fumbling—a pincushion!—(to think, now, of a pincushion on an uninhabited island!)—and handing it to me, bade me help pin her dress up for her. It was a task in its way to reconcile one almost to being marooned—for the moment, at least. I don't think I had known how perilously

emotional this woman had made me at heart in all thoughts that had reference to her, until I put my hand to the sweet and careless intimacy of this pinning job. It was a sort of haunting of her closest presence while it lasted, like bending the face to a flower that one has long been able to admire with the eye only. She watched me with a half-smile as I stooped round her, whilst I trimmed her canvas suitably to the best of my judgment for our adventure; with an air of unaffected indifference touched but very subtly with the most delicate imaginable spirit of coquetry. It was more like a flirting passage, indeed, in some merry picknicking jaunt—as though we two had strolled from the rest of the people, and I was clumsily trying to make good the dilapidations following an airy frolic—than a detail of one of the grimmest of all ocean-incidents. She again explored the box she had recently rummaged, and took from it the silver-mounted pistol which she had shown to me on board the brig, and after deliberating a minute or two, thrust the barrel into the bosom of her dress.

"I will carry it for you," said I, with a small recoil from the recklessness with which she had slid the loaded weapon aslant her beautiful figure. "Should you stumble—let me hold it for you."

She withdrew it, saying, "I must be armed as well as you. I shall know how to carry it." With that she opened another trunk, and after a brief hunt drew forth a dainty leathern belt of South American make and fashion, into which, after clasping it loosely round her, she stuck the pistol, where it lay safe enough, and ready to her hand besides; and then, equipping ourselves with a cotton umbrella apiece, we started for the green hummock that rose at about half a mile inland, taking a bit of a circuit to the left so as to go clear of the trees, into whose cathedral-like dimness it was difficult to peer without uncomfortable fancies of savage things—imagination

of bright hungry eyes glistening between some mighty spikes of aloes; the small head of a serpent half-way up a tree, with fold swelling upon fold of spotted, bloated skin, rising corkscrew-fashion to the green intricacies atop—all helped, as such notions would be, by the novel tropical smell of flower and gum in the wind, and the innumerable murmur of flies and insects skirring across the sight on wings of translucent pearl, and the melancholy, unmusical pipings of birds, one wailing to another and waiting for the answer, as it seemed.

We stepped along very cautiously, Miss Grant looking down for the most part, and I round about. The greenery soothed the eye, but there was a savageness put into everything you saw by the loneliness of the place that weighed perilously upon the spirits. For my part, I felt as though the sand we trod had never before received the impress of a human foot, and there were moments during that walk when the helplessness and hopelessness of our condition affected me so violently that I could scarce draw a breath, and I had to call a halt, feigning, with my hand to my brow, that I had paused only to obtain a better view of the island.

From the summit of the hummock we could see all around us. The sea went in a brilliant blue slope to the sky, the great dome of which, brassy with the glory of the sun that was but a little past the meridian, set you thinking of some mighty, brightly-burnished copper bell charged with fiery splendour shutting down over you, with this green spot of earth parching in the midst of it to the roasting metallic glare. A little leaning shaft of white, with an ice-like gleam upon it, broke the continuity of the southern seaboard. It was the canvas of the brig. From her right all round and back again to her the clear horizon ran without a flaw. If land were visible from the cross-trees of the Iron Crown, it was concealed from us here. The little forest betwixt us and the

creek hid the foreshore of the island past it; but one knew how it would be there by how it was wherever else the eye turned. The surf rimmed the white sands with three or four lines of flashing snow, which seemed to melt into the coral beach like liquid light, and the seething of it fell as delicately upon the ear as the hissing of champagne in a glass poised to the lips.

"It is all clear sea, apparently," said I; "the blue seems to me to spread everywhere the same. There is some chance for us in that, for in such soundings there can be no danger to navigation, and a vessel may heave close enough into view to perceive our signals at any hour."

"We should have some signals ready," said Miss Grant.

"Nothing to catch the eye like smoke," said I; "I will build a big bonfire up here this afternoon, ready to make a blaze when the time comes."

"The island is certainly uninhabited," she said, exploring it with her dark eyes. "It is hard to imagine that it has ever even been discovered; but it is best as it is, Mr. Musgrave. Surely the very worst shipwrecks are those in which sailors and passengers have been thrown amongst savages."

"It is blisteringly hot up here," said I, "let us return to the cool of the trees. A moment though! You have a keen sight. Can you distinguish anywhere upon this island the least gleam of water?"

She searched slowly and narrowly, as did I for the matter of that. Again and again I was deceived by some thin sinuous streak of sand that had the very sheen of a limpid stream in its dazzle, as it seemed to creep like some little brook amid the herbage of the denser growths; but my eye could regularly follow it to broader tracks which were unmistakably sand to the sight; and I was about to give up, when Miss Grant, who had been looking steadfastly in one direction for some minutes, said, "*That* must be a little waterfall yonder, Mr. Musgrave;

look past the curve there, over the head of that clump of bushes."

She pointed to the foot of the slope of another hummock, lower and smaller than the one on whose brow we stood, and in a breath I caught the sparkle of a waterfall shivering like splinters of bright steel against the green edge of the rise, and amidst the interlacy of the bush whose density a little lower down hid it. If it were fresh water it was of the first consequence in the world to us, and without another word we started for it. It proved as thirsty, bubbling, and murmuring a brook as ever lipped glass-like to an English river. Its source was some distance away; it flowed freshly in a channel of its own fretting to the spot at which we had arrived, when it sulked again in a wide pool, passing on afresh in a mimic torrent, narrowing for a space till its volume made a foam of it, then running clear under the sky for twenty fathoms, after which it pierced the herbage and vanished amidst the trees. I scooped up some with my hand and tasted it. New milk was never sweeter. I had a brandy-flask in my pocket, and with the help of the silver cup attached to it we drank our fill of this delicious water. No wine was ever so well tasted; it was ice-cold too, and of so diamond-like a clearness, that but for its whispers as it ran, and the hue of the blue sky in it, it would have been as invisible as water in a crystal vase. Short of the appearance of a ship promising deliverance to us, nothing, I am persuaded, could have so helped my spirits as the discovery of this fresh water. There was thirst in the dry and blinding sparkle of the sand; there was thirst in the aspect of the tracks of rusty yellow herbage which dashed the vegetation with their sickly tint; there was thirst in the hot air that everywhere trembled like the atmosphere over a flame, until in places the horizon waved as though a high swell were running out there, and the slender trunks of the cocoa-nut trees wound upon the sight with the move

ment of an archimedean screw slowly revolving. Here, then, were inspirations to make the discovery of this brook of running waters a positive rapture in its way. Suppose it had no existence, I thought; what should we have done? The beakers the men had dispatched us with held but a few gallons. Rain water might have been found perhaps by digging in the sand, but I had my doubts of that when I came to look at the dust of the milk-white foreshore. The mere fancy of our condition without this brook—the central roasting Eye sending an atmosphere of brass flowing to the furthest confines, the thirsty, salt noise of the surf (you could *hear* the saltiness of it in the seethe of each little recoiling breaker)—was almost enough to make one keep one's hot lips steeped in the crystal coolness and sweetness of the prattling stream.

But my heart fell again as we walked slowly towards the spot where our luggage was. Indeed, the mere sight of these details of civilization—port-manteaux, trunks of the latest fashion, rugs, camp-stools, walking-sticks, the twenty odds and ends which had gone to our equipment—made such a contrast of the inhospitable desolation of the spot of land on which we were imprisoned, that the stoutest spirit must have yielded, I think, to a feeling of hopelessness. How were we to obtain a shelter for the night? When our slender store of provisions gave out, where were we to look for a further stock? Again, unless we were taken off by some passing ship, what was our chance of escape? There was no lack of wood on the island, and with tools I might have contrived to put together some sort of log-fabric on which, under Heaven, we might have made shift to blow away to within reach of succour, whether of land or of ship; but without chopper or saw, yonder grove was of no more use to us than a handful of the white sand by the creek there. However, it was a little soon for lamentation, though on such an occasion as this a man's groans

would be deepest when his experiences were freshest.

"It is about time we broke our fast," said I; "perhaps we should feel faint had we nothing to think about but our appetites. The men were merciful to send our luggage ashore with us. Those camp-stools of yours are worth a million."

I opened one of the cases containing our provisions, and prepared a meal of preserved meat and biscuit, along with the remainder of a bottle of Madeira. The camp-stools made us seats, and our table was the lid of a trunk. Of all the passages of this particular nautical experience of my life, our first meal on this little nameless island recurs to me the most vividly. I think I hear now the hum of the sultry sea-breeze amid the boughs overhead, rendered refreshing to the ear by the metallic-like rustling of leaves, yet always blowing vibratory with the innumerable buzzings of flies and insects. I see again the green lizard, scarcely distinguishable from the foliage amongst which he lurked, viewing us with brilliant eyes from some limb on high. Occasionally there would come a harsh, short scream from a paroquet, and a flash of lustrous plumage from one verdant shadow to another, like a fragment of rainbow borne along by the wind, accompanied by the sharp rushing *skirr* of beating pinions. The sunshine was alive with the glancing forms of coloured things—now a great dragon-fly, a golden shaft propelled by wings of gossamer—now a butterfly of glorious hue—now some tiny red-breasted bird, a sort of wood-pecker, maybe, for I noticed that a drumming as of bills would spring up out of the quarter in which the streak of radiant feathers had vanished. Had all been well with us, good beds to look forward to at night, with even such necessities to support us as a backwood-settlement might supply, why, this little island, with my beautiful and courageous companion, would have been something—say even for a fortnight—to have entered into the reali-



ties of life as a sort of dream of paradise, a fancy for whose brief fulfilment under happy conditions I would barter a dozen years of the delights of the gayest and most showy cities of Europe. But 'twas sheer nightmare and nothing more, spite of the waving verdure of the savanna, of the glittering of the tropic bird, of flowers lovely as the constellations of the midnight of the Antilles, of the rain-like pattering of the leaves of the palm-tree, of odours as of the lime and the citron, when one sent one's gaze seawards, and felt the whole solitude of the mighty deep melting through and through into one in a kind of swoon, as it seemed, of the very soul.

However, we ate and drank, and were the better for it. I lighted a cheroot, and fell a-thinking with my eyes on Miss Grant. She was equally thoughtful, with a far-away expression in her face.

"There are nervous folks," said I, "who would not accept the gift of looking ahead even for a fortnight if they could make their fortunes through it. Throw me back a couple of months ago into Piccadilly, with leave to peer far enough to divine old Broadwater's nature, and to guess at the issues it must shape, and we should not be here."

"It is all my fault," said she.

"Mine!" I exclaimed. "I should have insisted on being put ashore with you in the English Channel."

"I mean it is my fault that you ever made the voyage," she replied.

"You would not wish to be alone, though," said I, smiling.

She shook her head with an unaffected shudder.

"What conclusions will Alexander arrive at," said I, "when day after day goes by, and no Iron Crown arrives at Rio?"

"I don't like to think of it," she answered; "but he will have to be patient. He must wait, as I must wait."

"Pity it is not the other way about," said I. "He ought to be here, and you safe at Rio."

She looked at me quickly, with a half-formed fancy, as it seemed, hovering on her lips, parted as if to speak, faintly coloured, and plucking a blade of the coarse grass at her side, appeared to study the texture of it.

"Alexander will conclude that the brig has gone down with all hands," I continued. "The men are sure to scuttle her, and as they know if rescued they will have to account for us and the two men they have made away with—Broadwater and Bothwell, I mean—it is odds if they don't invent the name of the ship they profess to have belonged to, so that the truth will never reach my cousin until we carry the news ourselves to him."

"Poor boy! his anxiety will be cruel. But perhaps we shall be with him sooner than we expect."

"I hope so, indeed, for your sake," said I, with a lift of my brows to the tormenting puzzlement of how it was to be done. "But sufficient unto the day, Miss Grant. Here are we marooned, and what's next to do? that's the question. No chance of our being taken off this afternoon, nor of our escaping in any other way. The night then is before us, and we must provide for it. I have no means of erecting any sort of shelter, and the island offers nothing. For my part, one of those rugs and a stretch of that dry sand will make me as good a couch as I need, spite of the land-crab and whatever else crawls hereabouts at night. But the notion of your lying on the cold ground is intolerable to me," said I, turning my eyes about in vain search of any hint for a high and dry bed for her in tree or slope.

"I have a net hammock in one of those boxes," she exclaimed, "unhappily only one. If you—"

"I! Lord love you, Miss Grant! Why, if it were not for the lizards aloft, I'd seize myself to a bough, and make a bed of one of those leafy forks up there, as Robinson Crusoe did. But there may be monkeys in this island for aught I know, and on the whole I fancy a sand-mattress promises me a



quieter couch than a tree. If you can find the hammock, we will turn to and rig it up in as snug a place as we can light on."

She immediately explored one of her boxes, and presently found the hammock. It was formed of net, but very strong, though so portable that one could have stowed it away in one's hat, with ship-shape clews and eyes and lengths of laniard ready spliced for lashings. This, it seems, like her pistol, her belt, and divers other matters, had been one of her Rio possessions. It was an odd thing to carry home from South America to the English climate; but it was an old relic of home, she told me, in which she had passed many a long slumberous hour under the scented and myriad-voiced shade of the cotton trees, of the gleaming leaves of the star-apple, and the slender branches bending to the weight of the golden shaddock. Besides, she knew little of Great Britain, and might have believed that the sun was as constant to the garden-plains and smoking cities of the greatest maritime nation on the face of the earth, as it was to the country in which she had been bred. But a spell of the Edgeware Road would suffice to correct even odder fancies than that.

I swung the hammock between two trees which exactly fitted the length of it. They stood somewhat forward from the group where our boxes were, with a tract of white sand hard by, which I had resolved should furnish me with a bed that night; so that she would swing close over me, and be as free likewise as one could possibly contrive from all risks of visits during the dark hours from the lizards and tree-toads in which I reckoned this island abounded. I formed a mattress and pillow for her of shawls and rugs, and, learning that she had some mosquito-curtains in her boxes, I borrowed a roll of white tape from her, wanting a better kind of line, and made a ridge-rope of it along her hammock, with a couple of pieces of wood cut from the

bough of a tree to serve as stanchions, that the ends of the curtain might float fair past the clews, and so protect her at both ends.

"Perhaps there are no mosquitoes," said she, watching me as I worked.

"I hope not," said I, doubtfully; "anyhow, I shall borrow one of your curtains, and roll myself up in it when the time comes. Unless my system has undergone a change since I was at Bombay, a mosquito-bite with me signifies a lump rather larger than a crow's egg, and as red as Broadwater's nose."

"We have plenty of them at Rio," said she, "but they never tease me. Though the species may be different here," she added, with a glance at the contrivance I had rigged up, which made me fancy that, bad as our melancholy and dreadful situation was, there would be nothing in it to hinder her from objecting to the defacement of her fair face by the singing pests of these rich and sparkling parallels.

I now found that occupation of any kind was helpful to my spirits, and thereupon pulling off my coat and waistcoat, and baring my arms, I went to work with a tolerably stout knife I happened to have in my pocket—one of those useful combinations of corkscrew, gimlet, saw, and the like—to cut as much dried stuff as I could make shift to deal with; of which I manufactured faggots by securing them with ligatures of grass strong enough to knot. Miss Grant insisted on helping me. She had replaced the somewhat small-brimmed hat she had come ashore in with a great yellow sombrero fashioned head-covering that sheltered her like an umbrella, and I see her now bending her graceful figure to the faggot at her feet, her white hands, with a flashing ring or two upon them, nimbly and swiftly knotting the grass bindings, lifting her face occasionally to address me, with her dark eyes the brighter, her teeth the whiter, her complexion the fairer, for the softness of the shadow which lay upon her

beauty. We manufactured a great number of these faggots, and conveyed the whole of them between us in several journeys to the summit of the hummock, where we built them up in a goodly pile, taking care to fence them about that they should not be blown away by a sudden squall or rising of wind, and further protecting the whole by a thick cover of live branches, densely-leaved, which would also thicken the smoke whenever the time came for us to set fire to the heap. The great heap made this labour very arduous, but though its completion left us both wearied, it was a thing to be done, and we felt the easier in our minds when it was finished. It was impossible to know but that at any hour we might happen to look seawards and spy a vessel slipping fleetly past, too far off to witness any waving signal of shawl or handkerchief, but well within view of such a volume of smoke as our body of faggots would make.

We paused a moment on the brow of the little elevation, before returning from our last excursion to the hummock, to take a long look round. The sun was sinking in the cloudless western heavens, a great shield of fast reddening fire; and the placid purple ocean beneath him seemed to rise with a rounding of its polished bosom as though drawn upwards by some mighty magnet. One could not look a moment without a weeping of the sight into the blinding glow of the western atmosphere; but the sea went from there into a tender deepening of turquoise against the orange reflection of the eastern sky, and the thin edge of surf took a colour from the sands that now shone golden in the evening light. The air blew very gentle and warm. The

tropic picture was deepened to every sense by the strange uncommon sounds rising from the island—queer chirpings and snorings; sharp short cries from the wood, like women's voices calling hoarsely; brief melancholy pipings making answer to like notes, sad, low, and more distant. The sound of the surf seethed through this curious concert, but nothing moved, look where one would, if it were not the flash of a bird of gorgeous plumage, a stir of some near tall spears of grass, or the curled head of a palm slightly swayed by the wind into a beckoning posture or an airy salutation. There was a quality in the light of the waning day that put a melancholy into the spirit of the solitude of this place far beyond the reach of moonlight or the starry darkness of the night. Fresh as we were from days and days of the loneliness and immensity of the deep, yet there was something in the boundless aspect of the ocean, as we surveyed it from the height of that hummock, which, speaking for myself, shocked and scared one's instincts as though one gazed at some preternatural revelation of sea. I saw Miss Grant droop in her posture, so to speak, at the sight of it; her clasped fingers holding her hands before her relaxed; her arms fell to her side; her head sank as she slowly brought her eyes from the flawless ocean to my face. She breathed slow and deep, as one in whom perception has grown to the weight of a burden upon the heart.

"Come," said I, taking her gently by the hand, "there is a morrow, and yet a morrow, before us. The good God is over all."

We walked slowly and in silence back to the spot where we meant to pass the night.

*(To be continued.)*

## GEORGE CRABBE.

THERE is a certain small class of persons in the history of literature the members of which possess, at least for literary students, an interest peculiar to themselves. They are the writers who having attained not merely popular vogue, but fame as solid as fame can ever be, in their own day, having been praised by the praised, and as far as can be seen having owed this praise to none of the merely external and irrelevant causes—politics, religion, fashion or what not—from which it sometimes arises, experience in a more or less short time after their death the fate of being, not exactly cast down from their high place, but left respectfully alone in it, unvisited, unincensed, unread. Among these writers, over the gate of whose division of the literary Elysium the famous "Who now reads Bolingbroke?" might serve as motto, the author of "The Village" and "Tales of the Hall" is one of the most remarkable. As for Crabbe's popularity in his own day there is no mistake about that. It was extraordinarily long, it was extremely wide, it included the select few as well as the vulgar, it was felt and more or less fully acquiesced in by persons of the most diverse tastes, habits, and literary standards. His was not the case, which occurs now and then, of a man who makes a great reputation in early life and long afterwards preserves it because, either by accident or prudence, he does not enter the lists with his younger rivals, and therefore these rivals can afford to show him a reverence which is at once graceful and cheap. Crabbe won his spurs in full eighteenth century, and might have boasted, altering Lander's words, that he had dined early and in the best of company, or have parodied Goldsmith, and said, "I have John-

son and Burke: all the wits have been here." But when his studious though barren manhood was passed, and he again began as almost an old man to write poetry, he entered into full competition with the giants of the new school, whose ideals and whose education were utterly different from his. While "The Library" and "The Village" came to a public which still had Johnson, which had but just lost Goldsmith, and which had no other poetical novelty before it than Cowper, "The Borough" and the later Tales entered the lists with "Marmion" and "Childe Harold", with "Christabel" and "The Excursion", even with "Endymion" and "The Revolt of Islam". Yet these later works of Crabbe met with the fullest recognition both from readers and from critics of the most opposite tendencies. Scott, the most generous, and Wordsworth,<sup>1</sup> the most grudging, of all the poets of the day towards their fellows, united in praising Crabbe; and unromantic as the poet of "The Village" seems to us he was perhaps Sir Walter's favourite English bard. Scott read him constantly, he quotes him incessantly; and no one who has read it can ever forget how Crabbe figures in

<sup>1</sup> In 1834, after Crabbe's death, Wordsworth wrote to his son: "Your father's works . . . will last, from their combined merit as poetry and truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since the date of their first appearance". Between the writing and the printing of this paper, a very different estimate by Wordsworth of Crabbe has been published (for the first time, I believe) in Mr. Claydon's "Rogers and his Contemporaries". Here he argues at great length that "Crabbe's verses can in no sense be called poetry", and that "nineteen out of twenty of his pictures are mere matter of fact". It is fair to say that this was in 1893, before the appearance of "The Borough" and of almost all Crabbe's best work.

the most pathetic biographical pages ever written—Lockhart's account of the death at Abbotsford. Byron's criticism was as weak as his verse was powerful, but still Byron had no doubt about Crabbe. The utmost flight of memory or even of imagination can hardly get together three contemporary critics whose standards, tempers and verdicts, were more different than those of Gifford, Jeffrey, and Wilson. Yet it is scarcely too much to say that they are all in a tale about Crabbe. In this unexampled chorus of eulogy there rose (for some others who can hardly have admired him much were simply silent), one single note, so far as I know, or rather one single rattling peal of thunder on the other side. It is true that this was significant enough, for it came from William Hazlitt.

Yet against this chorus, which was not, as has sometimes happened, the mere utterance of a loud-voiced few, but was echoed by a great multitude who eagerly bought and read Crabbe, must be set the almost total forgetfulness of his work which has followed. It is true that of living or lately living persons in the first rank of literature some great names can be cited on his side; and what is more, that these great names show the same curious diversity in agreement which has been already noticed as one of Crabbe's triumphs. The translator of Omar Khayyam, his friend the present Laureate, and the author of "The Dream of Gerontius", are men whose literary ideals are known to be different enough; yet they add a third trinity as remarkable as those others of Gifford, Jeffrey, and Wilson, of Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron. Much more recently Mr. Courthope has used Crabbe as a weapon in that battle of his with literary Liberalism which he has waged not always quite to the comprehension of his fellow-critics; Mr. Leslie Stephen has discussed him as one who knows and loves his eighteenth century. But who reads him? Who quotes him? Who likes him? I think I can ven-

ture to say, with all proper humility, that I know Crabbe pretty well: I think I may say with neither humility nor pride, but simply as a person whose business it has been for some years to read books, and articles, and debates, that I know what has been written and said in England lately. You will find hardly a note of Crabbe in these writings and sayings. He does not even survive, as "Matthew Green, who wrote 'The Spleen'", and others survive, by quotations which formerly made their mark, and are retained without a knowledge of their original. If anything is known about Crabbe to the general reader, it is the parody in "Rejected Addresses", an extraordinarily happy parody no doubt, in fact rather better Crabbe in Crabbe's weakest moments than Crabbe himself. But naturally there is nothing of his best there; and it is by his best things, let it be repeated over and over in face of all opposition, that a poet must be judged.

Although Crabbe's life, save for one dramatic revolution, was one of the least eventful in our literary history, it is by no means one of the least interesting. Mr. Kebbel's book<sup>1</sup> gives a very fair summary of it; but the *Life* by Crabbe's son which is prefixed to the collected editions of the poems and on which Mr. Kebbel's own is avowedly based, is perhaps the more interesting of the two. It is written with a curious mixture of the old literary state and formality, and of a feeling on the writer's part that he is not a literary man himself, and that not only his father but Mr. Lockhart, Mr. Moore, Mr. Bowles and the other high literary persons who assisted him were august beings of another sphere. This is all the more agreeable in that Crabbe's sons had advantages of education and otherwise which were denied to their father, and might in the ordinary course of things have been expected to show towards him a lofty patronage rather than any filial

<sup>1</sup> "Great Writers: Crabbe"; by T. E. Kebbel. London, 1888.

reverence. The poet himself was born at Aldborough, a now tolerably well known watering-place (the fortune of which was made by Mr. Wilkie Collins in "No Name") on Christmas Eve, 1754. That not uncommon infirmity of noble minds which seeks to prove distinguished ancestry seems to have had no hold on the plain common sense of the Crabbe family, who maintained themselves to be at the best Norfolk yeomen, and though they possessed a coat-of-arms, avowed with much frankness that they did not know how they got it. A hundred and forty years ago they had apparently lost even the dignity of yeomanhood, and occupied stations quite in the lower rank of the middle class as tradesmen, non-commissioned officers in the navy or the merchant service, and so forth. George Crabbe, the grandfather, was collector of customs at Aldborough, but his son, also a George, was a parish school-master and a parish clerk before he returned to the Suffolk port as deputy collector and then as salt-master, or collector of the salt duties. He seems to have had no kind of polish, and late in life was a mere rough drinking exciseman; but his education, especially in mathematics, appears to have been considerable, and his ability in business not small. The third George, his eldest son, was also fairly though very irregularly educated for a time, and his father perceiving that he was "a fool about a boat", had the rather unusual common sense to destine him to a learned profession. Unluckily his will was better than his means, and while the profession which Crabbe chose or which was chosen for him—that of medicine—was not the best suited to his tastes or talents, the resources of the family were not equal to giving him a full education, even in that. He was still at intervals employed in the Customs' warehouses at "piling up butter and cheese" even after he was apprenticed at fourteen to a country surgeon. The twelve years which he spent in this apprenticeship, in an abhorred return for a short time

to the cheese and butter, in a brief visit to London, where he had no means to walk the hospitals, and in an attempt to practise with little or no qualification at Aldborough itself, present a rather dismal history of apprenticeship which taught nothing. But Love was, for once, most truly and literally Crabbe's solace and his salvation, his master and his patron. When he was barely eighteen, still an apprentice, and possessed, as far as can be made out, neither of manners nor prospects, he met a certain Miss Sarah Elmy. She was three or four years older than himself and much better connected, being the niece and eventual co-heiress of a wealthy yeoman squire. She was, it is said, pretty; she was evidently accomplished, and she seems to have had access to the country society of those days. But Mira, as Crabbe called her, perhaps merely in the fashion of the eighteenth century, perhaps in remembrance of Fulke Greville's heroine (for he knew his Elizabethans rather well for a man of those days), and no doubt also with a secret joy to think that the last syllables of her Christian name and surname in a way spelt the appellation, fell in love with the boy and made his fortune. But for her Crabbe would probably have subsided, not contentedly but stolidly, into the lot of a Doctor Slop of the time, consoling himself with snuff (which he always loved) and schnaps (to which we have hints that in his youth he was not averse). Mira was at once unalterably faithful to him and unalterably determined not to marry unless he could give her something like a position. Their long engagement (they were not married till he was twenty-nine and she was thirty-three) may, as we shall see, have carried with it some of the penalties of long engagements. But it is as certain as any such thing can be that but for it English literature would have lacked the name of Crabbe.

There is no space here to go through the sufferings of the novitiate. At last, at the extreme end of 1779,



Crabbe made up his mind once more to seek his fortune, this time by aid of literature only, in London. His son has printed two rare scraps of a very interesting Journal to Mira which he kept during at least a part of the terrible year of struggle which he passed there. He saw the riots of '80; he canvassed, always more or less in vain, the booksellers and the peers; he spent three-and-sixpence of his last ten shillings on a copy of Dryden; he was much less disturbed about imminent starvation than by the delay of a letter from Mira ("my dearest Sally" she becomes with a pathetic lapse from convention, when the pinch is sorest) or by the doubt whether he had enough left to pay the postage of one. He writes prayers (but not for the public eye), abstracts of sermons for Mira, addresses (rather adulatory) to Lord Sherborne, which received no answer. All this has the most genuine note that ever man of letters put into his work, for whatever Crabbe was or was not, now or at any time, he was utterly sincere; and his sincerity makes his not very abundant letters and journals unusually interesting. At last, after a year during which his means of subsistence are for the most part absolutely unknown, he, as he says himself, fixed "by some propitious influence, in some happy moment" on Edmund Burke as the subject of a last appeal.

Nothing in all literary history is, in a modest way and without pearls and gold, quite so like a fairy tale as the difference in Crabbe's fortunes which this propitious influence brought about. On the day when he wrote to Burke he was, as he said in the letter "an outcast, without friends, without employment, without bread". In some twenty-four hours (the night-term of which he passed in ceaselessly pacing Westminster Bridge to cheat the agony of expectation) he was a made man. It was not merely that, directly or indirectly, Burke procured him a solid and an increasing income. He did much more than that. Crabbe, like

most self-educated men, was quite uncritical of his own work: Burke took him into his own house for months, encouraged him to submit his poems, criticized them at once without mercy and with judgment, found him publishers, found him a public, turned him from a raw country boy into a man who at least had met society of the best kind. It is a platitude to say that for a hundred persons who will give money or patronage there is scarcely one who will take trouble of this kind, and if any devil's advocate objects to the delight of producing a "lion" it may be answered that for Burke at least this delight would not have been delightful at all.

The immediate form which the patronage of Burke and that, soon added, of Thurlow took, is one which rather shocks the present day. They made Crabbe turn to the Church, and got a complaisant bishop to ordain him. They sent him (a rather dangerous experiment) to be curate in his own native place, and finally Burke procured him the chaplaincy at Belvoir. The young Duke of Rutland, who had been made a strong Tory by Pitt, was fond of letters, and his Duchess Isabel, who was,—like her elder kinswoman, Dryden's Duchess of Ormond—

A daughter of the rose, whose cheeks unite

The varying beauties of the red and white, in other words, a Somerset, was one of the most beautiful and gracious women in England. Crabbe, whose strictly literary fortunes I postpone for the present, was apparently treated with the greatest possible kindness by both; but he was not quite happy,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although constantly patronized by the Rutland family in successive generations, and honoured by the attentions of "Old Q." and others, his poems are full of growls at patrons. These cannot be mere echoes of Oldham and Johnson, but their exact reason is unknown. His son's reference to it is so extremely cautious that it has been read as a confession that Crabbe was prone to his cups, and quarrelsome in them—a signal instance of the unwisdom of not speaking out.



and his ever-prudent Mira still would not marry him. At last Thurlow's patronage took the practical form (it had already taken that, equally practical, of a hundred pounds) of two small Chancellor's livings in Dorsetshire, residence at which was dispensed with by the easy fashions of the day. The Duke of Rutland, when he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, did not take Crabbe with him, a circumstance which has excited some unnecessary discussion; but he gave him free quarters at Belvoir, where he and his wife lived for a time before they migrated to a neighbouring curacy—his wife, for even Mira's prudence had yielded at last to the Dorsetshire livings, and they were married in December, 1783. They lived together for nearly thirty years, in, as it would seem, unbroken mutual devotion, but Mrs. Crabbe's health seems very early to have broken down, and a remarkable endorsement of Crabbe's on a letter of hers has been preserved. I do not think Mr. Keblel quotes it; it ends, "And yet happiness was denied"—a sentence fully encouraging to Mr. Browning and other good men who denounce long engagements.<sup>1</sup> The story of Crabbe's life after his marriage may be told very shortly. His first patron died in Ireland, but the duchess with some difficulty prevailed on Thurlow to exchange his former gifts for more convenient and rather better livings in the neighbourhood of Belvoir, at the chief of

which, Muston, Crabbe long resided. The death of his wife's uncle made him leave his living and take up his abode for many years at Glemham, in Suffolk, only to find, when he returned, that (not unnaturally, though to his own great indignation) dissent had taken bodily possession of the parish. His wife died in 1813, and the continued kindness, after nearly a generation, of the house of Rutland, gave him the living of Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, with a small Leicestershire incumbency near Belvoir added, instead of Muston. At Trowbridge he lived nearly twenty years, revisiting London society, making the acquaintance personally (he had already known him by letter) of Sir Walter, paying a memorable visit to Edinburgh, flirting in an elderly and simple fashion with many ladies, writing much and being even more of a lion in the society of George the Fourth's reign than he had been in the days of George the Third. He died February 3rd, 1832.

Crabbe's character is not at all enigmatical, and emerges as clearly in such letters and diaries of his as have been published as in anecdotes of him by others. Perhaps the famous story of his politely endeavouring to talk French to divers Highlanders during George the Fourth's visit to Edinburgh is slightly embroidered—Lockhart, who tells it, was a mystifier without peer. His life, no less than his work, speaks him a man of amiable though by no means wholly sweet temper, of more common sense than romance, and of more simplicity than common sense. His nature and his early trials made him not exactly sour, but shy, till age and prosperity mellowed him; but simplicity was his chief characteristic in age and youth alike.

The mere facts of his strictly literary career are chiefly remarkable for the enormous gap between his two periods of productiveness. In early youth he published some verses in the magazines and a poem called "Inebriety", which appeared at Ipswich in 1775. His year

<sup>1</sup> Rogers told Ticknor in 1838 that "Crabbe was nearly ruined by grief and vexation at the conduct of his wife for above seven years, at the end of which time she proved to be insane". But this was long after his death and Crabbe's, and it is not clear that while she was alive Rogers knew Crabbe at all. Nor is there the slightest reason for attaching to the phrase "vexation at the conduct" the sense which it would usually have. A quarrel found after Crabbe's death wrapped round his wife's wedding-ring is touching, and graceful in its old-fashioned way.

The ring so worn, as you behold,  
So thin, so pale, is yet of gold:  
The passion such it was to prove;  
Worn with life's cares, love yet was love.

of struggle in London saw the publication of another short piece, "The Candidate", but with the ill-luck which then pursued him, the bookseller who brought it out became bankrupt. His despairing resort to Burke ushered in "The Library", 1781, followed by "The Village", 1783, which Johnson revised and improved not a little. Two years later again came "The Newspaper", and then twenty-two years passed without anything appearing from Crabbe's pen. It was not that he was otherwise occupied, for he had little or nothing to do, and for the greater part of the time lived away from his parish. It was not that he was idle, for we have his son's testimony that he was perpetually writing, and that holocausts of manuscripts in prose and verse used from time to time to be offered up in the open air for fear of setting the house on fire by their mass. At last, in 1807, "The Parish Register" appeared, and three years later "The Borough"—perhaps the strongest division of his work. The miscellaneous *Tales* came in 1812, the "Tales of the Hall" in 1819. Meanwhile and afterwards various collected editions appeared, the last and most complete being in 1829—a very comely little book in eight volumes. His death led to the issue of some "Posthumous *Tales*" and to the inclusion by his son of divers fragments both in the *Life* and in the *Works*. It is understood, however, that there are still considerable remains in manuscript; perhaps they might be published with less harm to the author's fame and with less fear of incurring a famous curse than in the case of almost any other poet.

For Crabbe, though by no means always at his best, is one of the most curiously equal of verse-writers. "Inebriety" and such other very youthful things are not to be counted; but between "The Village" of 1783 and the "Posthumous *Tales*" of more than fifty years later the difference is surprisingly small. Such as it is, it rather reverses ordinary experience,

for the later poems exhibit the greater play of fancy, the earlier the exacter graces of form and expression. Yet there is nothing really wonderful in this, for Crabbe's earliest poems were published under severe surveillance of himself and others, and at a time which still thought nothing of such value in literature as correctness, while his later were written under no particular censorship, and when the romantic revival had already for better or worse emancipated the world. The change was in Crabbe's case not wholly for the better. He does not in his later verse become more prosaic, but he becomes considerably less intelligible. There is a passage in "The Old Bachelor" too long to quote but worth referring to, which, though it may be easy enough to understand it with a little goodwill, I defy anybody to understand in its literal and grammatical meaning. Such welters of words are very common in Crabbe, and Johnson saved him from one of them in the very first lines of "The Village" by an emendation which Mr. Keibel seems not quite to understand. Yet Johnson could never have written the passages which earned Crabbe his fame. The great lexicographer knew man in general much better than Crabbe did; but he nowhere shows anything like Crabbe's power of seizing and reproducing man in particular. Crabbe is one of the first and certainly one of the greatest of the "realists" who, exactly reversing the old philosophical signification of the word, devote themselves to the particular only. Yet of the three small volumes by which he, after his introduction to Burke, made his reputation and on which he lived for a quarter of a century, the first and the last display comparatively little of this peculiar quality. "The Library" and "The Newspaper" are characteristic pieces of the school of Pope, but not characteristic of their author. The first catalogues books as folio, quarto, octavo, and so forth, and then cross-catalogues them as law, physic, divinity, and the rest,

but is otherwise written very much "in the air". "The Newspaper" suited Crabbe a little better, because he pretty obviously took a particular newspaper and went through its contents—scandal, news, reviews, advertisements—in his own special fashion, but still the subject did not appeal to him. In "The Village", on the other hand, contemporaries and successors alike have agreed to recognize Crabbe in his true vein. The two famous passages which attracted the suffrages of judges so different as Scott and Wordsworth, are still, after more than a hundred years, fresh, distinct, and striking. Here they are once more.

There is yon House that holds the parish  
poor,  
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the  
broken door;  
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging,  
play,  
And the dull wheel hums doleful through  
the day;—  
There children dwell who know no  
parents' care;  
Parents who know no children's love  
dwell there!  
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless  
bed,  
Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed;  
Dejected widows, with unheeded tears,  
And crippled age with more than child-  
hood fears;  
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest  
they!  
The moping idiot and the madman gay.

Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,  
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;  
With looks unaltered by these scenes of  
woe,  
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste  
to go,  
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,  
And carries fate and physic in his eye:  
A potent quack, long versed in human ills,  
Who first insults the victim whom he  
kills;  
Whose murderous hand a drowsy Bench  
protect,  
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.  
Paid by the parish for attendance here,  
He wears contempt upon his sapient  
sneer;  
In haste he seeks the bed where Misery  
lies,

Impatience marked in his averted eyes;  
And some habitual queries hurried o'er,  
Without reply he rushes on the door:  
His drooping patient, long inured to pain,  
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance  
vain,  
He ceases now the feeble help to crave  
Of man; and silent, sinks into the grave.

The poet executed endless variations on this class of theme, but he never quite succeeded in discovering a new one, though in process of time he brought his narrow study of the Aldborough fishermen and townsfolk down still more narrowly to individuals. His landscape is always marvellously exact, the strokes selected with extraordinary skill so as to show autumn rather than spring, failure rather than hope, the riddle of the painful earth rather than any joy of living. Attempts have been made to vindicate Crabbe from the charge of being a gloomy poet, but I cannot think them successful; I can hardly think that they have been quite serious. Crabbe, our chief realistic poet, has an altogether astonishing likeness to the chief prose realist of France, Gustave Flaubert, so far as his manner of view goes, for in point of style the two have small resemblance. One of the most striking things in Crabbe's biography is his remembrance of the gradual disillusion of a day of pleasure which as a child he enjoyed in a new boat of his father's. We all of us, except those who are gifted or cursed with the proverbial "duck's back", have these experiences and these remembrances of them. But most men either simply grin and bear it, or carrying the grin a little farther, console themselves by regarding their own disappointments from the ironic and humorous point of view. Crabbe, though not destitute of humour, does not seem to have been able or to have been disposed to employ it in this way. Perhaps he never quite got over the terrible and for the most part unrecorded year in London: perhaps the difference between the Mira of promise and the Mira of possession—the "happiness denied"—had some-

thing to do with it: perhaps it was a question of natural disposition with him; but when years afterwards as a prosperous middle-aged man, he began his series of published poems once more with "The Parish Register", the same manner of seeing is evident, though the minuteness and elaboration of the views themselves is almost infinitely greater. Nor did he ever succeed in altering it, if he ever tried to do so.

With the exception of his few Lyrics, the most important of which, "Sir Eustace Grey" (one of his very best things), is itself a tale in different metre, and a few other occasional pieces of little importance, the entire work of Crabbe, voluminous as it is, is framed upon a single pattern, the vignettes of "The Village" being merely enlarged in size and altered in frame in the later books. The three parts of "The Parish Register" the twenty-four Letters of "The Borough", some of which have single and others grouped subjects, and the sixty or seventy pieces which make up the three divisions of Tales, consist almost exclusively of heroic couplets, shorter measures very rarely intervening. They are also almost wholly devoted to narratives, partly satirical, partly pathetic, of the lives of individuals of the lower and middle class chiefly. Jeffrey, who was a great champion of Crabbe and allotted several essays to him, takes delight in analyzing the plots or stories of these tales; but it is a little amusing to notice that he does it for the most part exactly as if he were criticizing a novelist or a dramatist. "The object", says he, in one place, "is to show that a man's fluency of speech depends very much upon his confidence in the approbation of his auditors": "In Squire Thomas we have the history of a mean, domineering spirit", and so forth. Gifford in one place actually discusses Crabbe as a novelist. I shall make some further reference to this curious attitude of Crabbe's admiring critics. For the moment I shall

only remark that the singularly mean character of so much of Crabbe's style, the "style of drab stucco", as it has been unkindly called, which is familiar from the wicked wit that tells how the youth at the theatre

Regained the felt and felt what he regained,

is by no means universal. The most powerful of all his pieces, the history of Peter Grimes, the tyrant of apprentices, is almost entirely free from it, and so are a few others. But it is common enough to be a very serious stumbling-block. In nine tales out of ten this is the staple:

Of a fair town where Dr. Rack was guide,  
His only daughter was the boast and pride.

Now that is unexceptionable verse enough, but what is the good of putting it in verse at all? Here again:

For he who makes me thus on business wait,

Is not for business in a proper state.

It is obvious that you cannot trust a man who, unless he is intending a burlesque, can bring himself to write like that. Crabbe not only brings himself to it, but rejoices and luxuriates in the style. The tale from which that last luckless distich is taken, "The Elder Brother", is full of pathos and about equally full of false notes. If we turn to a far different subject, the very vigorously conceived "Natural Death of Love", we find a piece of strong and true satire, the best thing of its kind in the author, which is kept up throughout. Although, like all satire, it belongs at best but to the outer courts of poetry, it is so good that none can complain. Then the page is turned and one reads:

"I met," said Richard, when returned to dine,

"In my excursion with a friend of mine."

It may be childish, it may be uncritical, but I own that such verse as that excites in me an irritation which destroys all power of enjoyment, except

the enjoyment of ridicule. Nor let any one say that pedestrian passages of the kind are inseparable from ordinary narrative in verse and from the adaptation of verse to miscellaneous themes. If it were so the argument would be fatal to such adaptation, but it is not. Pope seldom indulges in such passages, though he does sometimes: Dryden never does. He can praise, abuse, argue, tell stories, make questionable jests, do anything, in verse that is still poetry, that has a throb and a quiver and a swell in it, and is not merely limp, rhythmized prose. In Crabbe, save in a few passages of feeling and a great many of mere description—the last an excellent setting for poetry but not necessarily poetical—this rhythmized prose is everywhere. The matter which it serves to convey is, with the limitations above given, varied, and it is excellent. No one except the greatest prose novelists has such a gallery of distinct, sharply etched characters, such another gallery of equally distinct scenes and manner-pieces, to set before the reader. Exasperating as Crabbe's style sometimes is he seldom bores—never indeed except in his rare passages of digressive reflection. It has, I think, been observed, and if not the observation is obvious, that he has done with the pen for the neighbourhood of Aldborough and Glemham what Crome and Cotman have done for the neighbourhood of Norwich with the pencil. His observation of human nature, so far as it goes, is not less careful, true, and vivid. His pictures of manners, to those who read them at all, are perfectly fresh and in no respect grotesque or faded, dead as the manners themselves are. His pictures of motives and of facts, of vice and virtue, never can fade, because the subjects are perennial and are truly caught. Even his plays on words, which horrified Jeffrey,—

Alas! your reverence, wanton thoughts I grant

Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want,

and the like,—are not worse than Milton's jokes on the guns. He has immense talent, and he has the originality which sets talent to work in a way not tried by others, and may thus be very fairly said to turn it into genius. He is all this and more. But despite the warnings of a certain precedent, I cannot help stating the case which we have discussed in the old form, and asking, was Crabbe a poet?

And thus putting the question, we may try to sum up. It is the gracious habit of a summing-up to introduce, if possible, a dictum of the famous men our fathers that were before us, a habit which by me shall ever be honoured. I have already referred to Hazlitt's criticism on Crabbe in "The Spirit of the Age", and I need not, here at least, repeat at very great length the cautions which are always necessary in considering any judgment of Hazlitt's. Much that he says even in the brief space of six or eight pages which he allots to Crabbe is unjust; much is explicable, and not too creditably, unjust. Crabbe was a successful man, and Hazlitt did not like successful men: he was a clergyman of the Church of England, and Hazlitt did not love clergymen of the Church of England: he had been a duke's chaplain, and Hazlitt loathed dukes: he had been a Radical, and was still (though Hazlitt does not seem to have thought him so) a Liberal, but his Liberalism had been Torified into a tame variety. Again, Crabbe, though by no means squeamish, is the most unvoluptuous and dispassionate of all describers of inconvenient things; and Hazlitt was the author of "Liber Amoris". Accordingly there is much that is untrue in the tissue of denunciation which the critic devotes to the poet. But there are two passages in this tirade which alone might show how great a critic Hazlitt himself was. Here in a couple of lines ("they turn, one and all, on the same sort of teasing, helpless, unimaginative distress") is the germ of one of the



most famous and certainly of the best passages of the late Mr. Arnold; and here again is one of those critical taps of the finger which shivers by a touch of the weakest part a whole Rupert's drop of misapprehension. Crabbe justified himself by Pope's example. "Nothing", says Hazlitt, "can be more dissimilar. Pope describes what is striking: Crabbe would have described merely what was there. . . . In Pope there was an appeal to the imagination, you see what was passing in a poetical point of view."

Even here (and I have not been able to quote the whole passage) there is one of the flaws, which Hazlitt rarely avoided, in the use of the word "striking"; for, Heaven knows, Crabbe is often striking enough. But the description of Pope as showing things "in a poetical point of view" hits the white at once, wounds Crabbe mortally, and demolishes "realism", as we have been pleased to understand it for the last generation or two. Hazlitt, it is true, has not followed up the attack, as I shall hope to show in an instant; but he has indicated the right line of it. As far as mere treatment goes, the fault of Crabbe is that he is pictorial rather than poetic, and photographic rather than pictorial. He sees his subject steadily, and even in a way he sees it whole; but he does not see it in the poetical way. You are bound in the shallows and the miseries of the individual; never do you reach the large freedom of the poet who looks at the universal. The absence of selection, of the discarding of details that are not wanted, has no doubt a great deal to do with this—Hazlitt seems to have thought that it had everything to do. I do not quite agree with him there. Dante, I think, was sometimes quite as minute as Crabbe; and I do not know that any one less hardy than Hazlitt himself would single out, as Hazlitt expressly does, the death-bed scene of Buckingham as a conquering instance in Pope to compare with Crabbe. We know that the bard of Twickenham grossly

exaggerated this. But suppose he had not? Would it have been worse verse? I think not. Although the faculty of selecting instead of giving all, as Hazlitt himself justly contends, is one of the things which make *poesis non ut pictura*, it is not all, and I think myself that a poet, if he is a poet, could be almost absolutely literal. Shakespeare is so in the picture of Gloucester's corpse. Is that not poetry?

The defect of Crabbe, as it seems to me, is best indicated by reference to one of the truest of all dicta on poetry, the famous maxim of Joubert—that the lyre is a winged instrument and must transport. There is no wing in Crabbe, there is no transport, because, as I hold (and this is where I go beyond Hazlitt), there is no music. In all poetry, the very highest as well as the very lowest that is still poetry, there is something which transports, and that something in my view is always the music of the verse, of the words, of the cadence, of the rhythm, of the sounds superadded to the meaning. When you get the best music married to the best meaning, then you get, say, Shakespeare: when you get some music married to even moderate meaning, you get, say, Moore. Wordsworth can, as everybody but Wordsworthians holds, and as some even of Wordsworthians admit, write the most detestable doggerel and platitude. But when any one who knows what poetry is reads,

Our noisy years seem moments in the  
being  
Of the eternal silence,

he sees that, quite independently of the meaning, which disturbs the soul of no less a person than Mr. John Morley, there is one note added to the articulate music of the world—a note that never will leave off resounding till the eternal silence itself gulfs it. He leaves Wordsworth, he goes straight into the middle of the eighteenth century, and he sees Thomson with his hands in his dressing-gown pockets



biting at the peaches, and hears him between the mouthfuls murmuring,

So when the shepherd of the Hebrid Isles,  
Placed far amid the melancholy main,

and there is another note, as different as possible in kind yet still alike, struck for ever. Yet again, to take example still from the less romantic poets, and in this case from a poet, whom Mr. Keble specially and disadvantageously contrasts with Crabbe, when we read the old schoolboy's favourite,

When the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,

we hear the same quality of music informing words though again in a kind somewhat lower, commoner, and less. In this matter, as in all matters that are worth handling at all, we come of course *ad mysterium*. Why certain combinations of letters, sounds, cadences, should almost without the aid of meaning though no doubt immensely assisted by meaning, produce this effect of poetry on men no man can say. But they do; and the chief merit of criticism is that it enables us by much study of different times and different languages to recognize something like the laws, though not the ultimate causes, of the production.

Now I can only say that Crabbe does not produce, or only in the rarest instances produces, this effect on me, and what is more, that on ceasing to be a patient in search of poetical stimulant and becoming merely a gelid critic, I do not discover even in Crabbe's warmest admirers any evidence that he produced this effect on them. Both in the eulogies which Mr. Keble quotes and in those that he does not quote I observe that the eulogists either discreetly avoid saying what they mean by poetry, or specify for praise something in Crabbe that is not distinctly poetical. Cardinal Newman says that Crabbe "pleased and touched him at thirty years' interval", and pleads that this answers to the "accidental definition of

a classic". Most certainly; but not necessarily to that of a poetical classic. Jeffrey thought him "original and powerful". Granted; but there are plenty of original and powerful writers who are not poets. Wilson gave him the superlative for "original and vivid painting". Perhaps; but is Hogarth a poet? Jane Austen "thought she could have married him". She had not read his biography; but even if she had would that prove him to be a poet? Lord Tennyson is said to single out the following passage, which is certainly one of Crabbe's best, if not his very best.

Early he rose, and looked with many a  
sigh  
On the red light that filled the eastern  
sky;  
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,  
To hail the glories of the new-born day;  
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,  
He saw the wind upon the water blow,  
And the cold stream curled onward as the  
gale  
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the  
vale;  
On the right side the youth a wood sur-  
veyed,  
With all its dark intensity of shade;  
Where the rough wind alone was heard  
to move  
In this, the pause of nature and of love  
When now the young are reared, and when  
the old,  
Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold:  
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,  
Half hid in mist that hung upon the fen:  
Before him swallows gathering for the  
sea,  
Took their short flights and twittered o'er  
the lea;  
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest  
done,  
And slowly blackened in the sickly sun:  
All these were sad in nature, or they took  
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look  
And of his mind—he pondered for a while,  
Then met his Fanny with a borrowed  
smile.

It is good: it is extraordinarily good: it could not be better of its kind. It is as nearly poetry as anything that Crabbe ever did—but is it quite? If it is (and I am not careful to deny it) the reason as it seems to

me is that the verbal and rhythmical music here, with its special effect of "transporting" of "making the common as if it were uncommon", is infinitely better than is usual with Crabbe, that in fact there is music as well as meaning. Hardly anywhere else, not even in the best passages of the story of Peter Grimes, shall we find such music; and in its absence it may be said of Crabbe much more truly than of Dryden (who carries the true if not the finest poetical undertone with him even into the rant of Almanzor and Maximin, into the interminable arguments of "Religio Laici" and "The Hind and the Panther") that he is a classic of our prose.

Yet the qualities which are so noteworthy in him are all qualities which are valuable to the poet, and which for the most part are present in good poets. And I cannot help thinking that this was what actually deceived some of his contemporaries and made others content for the most part to acquiesce in an exaggerated estimate of his poetical merits. It must be remembered that even the latest generation which, as a whole and unhesitatingly, admired Crabbe, had been brought up on the poets of the eighteenth century, in the very best of whom the qualities which Crabbe lacks had been but sparingly and not eminently present. It must be remembered, too, that from the great vice of the poetry of the eighteenth century, its artificiality and convention, Crabbe is conspicuously free. The return to nature was not the only secret of the return to poetry; but it was part of it, and that Crabbe returned to nature no one could doubt. Moreover he came just between the school of prose fiction which practically ended with "Evelina" and

the school of prose fiction which opened its different branches with "Waverley" and "Sense and Sensibility". His contemporaries found nowhere else the narrative power, the faculty of character-drawing, the genius for description of places and manners which they found in Crabbe; and they knew that in almost all, if not in all the great poets there is narrative power, faculty of character-drawing, genius for description. Yet again, Crabbe put these gifts into verse which at its best was excellent in its own way, and at its worst was a blessed contrast to Darwin or to Hayley. Some readers may have had an uncomfortable though only half-conscious feeling that if they had not a poet in Crabbe they had not a poet at all. At all events they made up their minds that they had a poet in him.

But are we bound to follow their example? I think not. You could play on Crabbe that odd trick which used, it is said, to be actually played on some mediæval verse chroniclers and unrhyme him—that is to say, put him into prose with the least possible changes—and his merits would, save in rare instances, remain very much as they are now. You could put other words in the place of his words, keeping the verse, and it would not as a rule be much the worse. You cannot do either of these things with poets who are poets. Therefore I shall conclude that save at the rarest moments, moments of some sudden gust of emotion, some happy accident, some special grace of the Muses to reward long and blameless toil in their service, Crabbe was not a poet. But I have not the least intention of denying that he was great, and all but of the greatest, among English writers.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

## JOHN BRIGHT AND QUAKERISM.

BY AN EX-QUAKER.

THE death of John Bright once more reminded the world that the great orator and patriot belonged to one of the smallest religious communities. The full descriptions in the newspapers of the simple funeral at Rochdale probably made the English people realise, as they had never realised before, where John Bright stood in relation to the Churches of the country. For a moment the most modest and retiring of sects was brought prominently forward; its quiet ways of worship came suddenly under the notice of millions to whom Quakerism had hitherto been little but a name.

It is perhaps not too much to say that for many years the most frequent remark about Quakerism has been that it is dying out; yet surely that was hardly the thought most naturally suggested by the scene at the little Meeting-house at Rochdale on March 30th. Death was, indeed, master there for a moment and in the material sense. But the question of the hour was not, how came bodily death there? but rather, whence came that spiritual vitality which had been so pure, vigorous, and noble; which all ranks and parties in the state were there to honour, and whose fruits would be remembered for generations to come? And one part of that question would be, what did John Bright owe to his Quakerism? Some interest may be found in a few words upon this latter question by one who knows Quakerism, its schools, its worship, and its social life, from both the inside and the outside points of view.

First, however, it must be fully acknowledged that John Bright had gifts which would have made him eminent from whatever religious com-

munity he might have sprung. It was not due to his very slight education in the Quaker schools at Ackworth and York that he became a brilliant orator; still less was it due to the example or precept set before him in Quaker Meeting. It was neither at school nor at Meeting that he acquired even his command of the English language and his love for English poetry. Men of genius always belong to their nation rather than to a sect, and cannot be measured by any sectarian standard. But a glance at John Bright in his special relations with his sect will show this only the more plainly, and at the same time will gratify the legitimate curiosity which would seek to follow him into the religious circle in which he moved.

John Bright was unique as a politician, and Quakerism is unique as a religion; there is an attraction at once in both, as objects of study. But a comparison between them has yet a third point of interest, in the fact that John Bright was unique as a Quaker. The question must have occurred to many minds, how far did the popular leader illustrate, and how far did he transcend, the ordinary type of Quaker? What place did the admired and combative orator occupy in the most peaceful, least popular and least talkative sect? The following remarks will bear chiefly on this point.

The deepest and most intimate relations between a man's religion and his outward life are seldom brought into view until his biography is fully written, and the present instance is no exception. Every one knows that John Bright spoke not unfrequently, and always loyally, of his own religious community, and his last wishes are

evidence that he remained a staunch Friend to the end. Every one knows also that his speeches abound with Biblical allusions, quotations, and illustrations, and with appeals to religious sentiments. But probably most people outside the Society of Friends will be surprised to learn how small a part he took in what men ordinarily call the life and work of their Church. And, indeed, I think there is some ground for surprise within the Society itself. For consider the facts. Here was one of the most gifted, earnest, and religious speakers in the country, a member of a religious society which offers opportunity and freedom of speech equalled by few if any other religious bodies, and yet within the Society he was one of the most silent members. John Bright's voice was never heard in meetings for worship, and only occasionally in meetings for business. This is a remarkable circumstance. A Friends' Meeting is in theory the most free and equal body of worshippers there can be. There is no official priest or minister to lead the devotions. No sacerdotal authority or exclusive function of any kind is recognised. Poor and rich, learned and unlearned, men and women are on the same level. The Spirit, which is no respecter of persons, may choose its spokesmen from any class, or it may choose no spokesman at all. "Surely", a stranger would exclaim, "here was a field for the noblest exercise of such gifts as John Bright possessed. Mr. Gladstone is only permitted to read the lessons. Did not John Bright use his greater opportunities?" No, he did not.

This will appear the more remarkable when it is considered how widely the Society of Friends differs from other religious bodies in matters of great importance. In most Churches, instruction and exhortation on such matters are conveyed at least occasionally in sermons. It is considered needful to warn the people, especially the young, against the errors and dangers of beliefs and practices not

recognized by the Body. What scope and what need (according to the usual view of worship) for such addresses as John Bright could have given on the true calling of the ministry, on baptism, the communion and other ceremonies, on holy days, on oaths, on war!

Those however who know the customs of Quakers are aware that in meetings for worship they do not deal with such points in the manner of ordinary preachers. If an enquirer wishing to know the "evidences" of the Quaker form of faith went to Quaker meeting to learn them, he would go in vain. He might repeat his visit Sunday after Sunday for a year and gain no fresh light of the desired kind. He would hear at best the vaguest and most general allusions to the distinctive views of the worshippers. He would be more fortunate than the present writer, who has had years of experience, if he heard a single address making a full and clear defence of any Quaker doctrine against the rival doctrines of other Churches. All such defence is relegated to special lectures or other meetings, and at these John Bright did occasionally speak, especially if the subject was war; but the Quaker means and methods of carrying on work of this kind are very unsystematic, irregular and uncertain.

But a man of John Bright's intense earnestness and simple piety might have done much to edify his own people by addresses upon the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. With what power would he have impressed those truths! With what beauty would he have clothed them! So one would think. No great English orator has ever in political speeches appealed so frequently or so forcibly to his listeners' faith in God, to their belief in the providential ordering of things for the triumph of justice and truth, to their reverence for the person of Christ, to their sense of the practical nature of the Christian religion, to the sentiments of pity and sympathy and justice as essential elements of that

religion. It was on the occasion of such an appeal that Lord Palmerston, rising to reply, spoke of John Bright as "the honourable and reverend gentleman". The sneer was more worthy of the "infidel" lecturer than the first minister of the Crown; but it would not have been so effective as it was in raising a laugh unless there had been an element of truth in it. The offensive epithet was incongruous as applied to a member of a religious body which recognizes no title indicative of professional religious functions (and this fact no doubt made it doubly laughable to those who were in a mood to laugh), but it also quite truly implied that John Bright spoke with more religious feeling than politicians are accustomed to show. He brought his religion directly into his politics. He did not hesitate to make it plain that he spoke as a religious man, and that he thought references to the principles of the Church not out of place in the Houses of Parliament. He was a political preacher, if ever there was one. How was it, then, that he was not a preacher among his own people, by whom he would have been listened to with reverence rather than with sneers?

It is very easy to give a wrong answer to such a question, when there are but few data to found judgment upon. The error most likely to be made is the mistaking of a partial for a complete explanation. The following thoughts are therefore put forward as suggestive and hypothetical rather than as a complete and verified theory.

Any one who has read Charles Lamb's beautiful description of a Quaker Meeting should have a pretty correct idea of the prevailing atmosphere of that remarkable species of human assembly. It is an atmosphere of singular stillness, which may appear to one person the stillness of a sultry southern noon, to another the stillness of the keen arctic night, but which tends to bring to all an intense self-consciousness. The soul seems to be

alone with God. It is as if the creation day were come again, when the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". There, if anywhere, are people who believe, like the prophet, that God speaks, not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the "still, small voice". There is probably little in the Quakers' abstract doctrine of the Holy Spirit from which the majority of Christians would dissent. It is the prominence which they have given to that doctrine and their mode of applying it, that has made their worship and preaching so unique. They have given a peculiar distinctness and emphasis to the Holy Spirit's functions, and (a more important point) they have attached particular value to its spontaneous manifestations.

In the most widely accepted statement of Quaker views, namely Barclay's "Apology," the writer, having asked what the minister's "proper work is, how and by what rule he is to be ordered", answers as follows: "Our opponents do all along go upon externals, and therefore have certain prescribed rules contrived according to their human wisdom; we, on the contrary, walk still upon the same foundation, and lean always upon the immediate assistance and influence of that Holy Spirit which God has given His children, to teach them all things and lead them in all things". And in another place he says: "The Spirit of God should be the immediate persuader and influencer of man in the particular acts of worship, when the saints are met together." One would naturally expect preaching believed to emanate from immediate inspiration to be distinguished by freshness, vigour, and fire, and these were not uncommon characteristics of the preaching of the early Quakers. But the belief in the immediate inspiration has had after all a very narrow scope. Manifestly it might lead to utter disorder and license, if there were no check. The kind of check which has operated in Quakerism is indicated in the following sentences from Barclay: "When as-

sembled, the great work of one and all ought to be to wait upon God; and excluding their own thoughts and imaginations, to feel the Lord's presence. . . . As there can be nothing more opposite to the natural will and wisdom of man than this silent waiting upon God, so neither can it be obtained, nor rightly comprehended by man, but as he layeth down his own wisdom and will, so as to be content to be thoroughly subject to God". This exclusion of men's "own thoughts and imaginations", of "the natural wisdom and will of man" is consistent, it gives an appearance of completeness and clearness to the theory of the ministry. But as a practical precept, it is the source of endless ambiguities and doubts. To such persons as have reached definite and firm convictions and have the zeal of the missionary enthusiast, it will give the magnetic power of entire assurance; but on the majority of persons it will impose either silence or a timid, hesitating, trembling manner of speech. Moreover, in all cases it will produce a kind of preaching peculiarly narrow in its range, touching at the fewest possible points the common affairs and interests of life. It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why Quaker preaching has ceased to attract and win numbers, since the time when the early missionary enthusiasm of the body declined.

Man's "thoughts and imaginations", his "wisdom and will!" What may not be included under these categories? There is just now a tendency to relax that strictness of interpretation, which, I fear, has long crippled Quaker ministry. The younger and more intellectual members of the body have been influenced by the new religious currents of the age, and are introducing innovations which twenty years ago would have shocked most of the Quakers of John Bright's generation.

In the eyes of the latter the addresses now sometimes read from manuscript in Quaker Meeting would have been but bits of man's wisdom and will: a quotation from Shakespeare would have

aroused suspicion of other communion than that of the Holy Spirit; any detailed allusion to a current political event would have been startling; a personal reference on the occasion of the death of a great statesman or writer would have been considered a questionable freedom; a consecutive controversial argument would have savoured too plainly of human reason. Above all, preachers were particularly watchful to avoid the slightest taint of the human arts of eloquence. Plain extempore language, exclusively Biblical quotation and illustration, a timidly uncontroversial tone, a subdued and constrained manner—these have long been the characteristic features of Quaker preaching. It seems, then, safe to say that, whatever Quaker Meeting did for John Bright in other respects, it did nothing for the development of his oratorical as distinguished from his intellectual and moral powers. On the contrary, in default of fuller evidence, it may be assumed that the climate of the place was distinctly unfavourable to their exercise, and that this was one reason why John Bright kept silence among his own people. For he was made for a more vigorous, spontaneous, outspoken and varied mode of address than that prevailing within those simple and narrow homes of Quaker worship. He would not have felt at ease within the undefined but customary limits. His style would have been an incongruity, though a splendid incongruity. Frequent ministry would perhaps have diminished its force and flexibility, and in that case, though Quakerism, in a narrow sense, might have gained, England would have lost.

I trust I have succeeded in showing that Bright's eloquence is not less but more remarkable from the fact that he was a Quaker, and also that he is a unique figure in the history of his sect. The Society of Friends has produced many devoted philanthropists, and it has firmly though quietly supported every movement for political reform. But never before has there



sprung from it a great political orator. Most of the leading Quaker philanthropists have been preachers also, and it would appear that, if the Quakers could have avoided rigidity in the standards and habits of their ministry while preserving its unprofessional and sincere character, they would have been more likely than any other religious community to produce political orators of the best stamp. But the crude and untrained style of the Meeting-house has influenced their whole style of public utterance. In the case of John Bright such influence was minimised on the one hand by his silence in the Meeting-house and on the other hand by his frank recognition of eloquence as an art which it is lawful and desirable to cultivate.

In this latter respect he has set an example which has borne and will yet bear much fruit among the Friends. John Bright, though he did not preach what his own people would recognize as sermons, was one of the truest followers of George Fox that the Society ever contained. He carried on George Fox's work in a sphere where it was most needed and in a manner adapted to the changed ideas and conditions of our time. For what was the essential truth in George Fox's teaching in its application to speaking and preaching? This—that only out of deep personal conviction and in obedience to the imperative promptings of duty should a man dare to speak to his fellows of truth and righteousness and love, and expound God's laws of justice and mercy; but that whenever he did feel such a call, he should feel that he bore the responsibility of a divine message. This, express it as we may, is a grand and eternal truth. Faithfulness to it has given Quakerism whatever strength it has had, and probably all parties will agree that it

has possessed a strength out of proportion to its numbers. But in spite of its protest against forms, Quakerism has formalized in some degree its own fundamental truth. It has not altogether escaped the tendency which appears in every religious body to preserve the early habits and methods of the society long after they have become unsuitable and inadequate. For some time Quakerism, especially in its preaching and worship, has shown a very low vitality. Some of the younger Friends are slowly bringing about small changes, and it remains to be proved whether they realize what will be required before the Society can exercise as great an influence as formerly upon the religious life of England. John Bright's career may be taken as an index of what it could do, if it were freed from merely traditional trammels. For he was not only a man of genius, he was also a Quaker preacher, though he preached chiefly outside the Quaker fold. No Quaker was ever more entirely ruled by the essential truth of George Fox's teaching, as described above, but the conventional ideas and habits of Quaker Meeting were too narrow for the free utterance of the spirit within him. The moral to be drawn from the singular fact of the great orator's silence as a worshipper is, I believe, the following—that the root of simplicity, sincerity and devotion from which Quakerism originally sprang is still living and strong, but it is in danger of becoming cramped by Meeting-house proprieties; and if it is to flourish again and bear its proper fruit, it must be replanted, or at least allowed to draw nourishment from the new soil of thought and liberty which the Spirit has prepared during the last two hundred years.

## LORD DUFFERIN'S ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA.

THE speech which Lord Dufferin made before he left Calcutta deserves a larger share of attention than it has received in this country. Referring to his own administration and to the general policy of the Government of India, he said :

The verdict upon both these has passed out of my hands, and it will be the pen of the historian that will determine whether my colleagues and myself have succeeded in any adequate degree in contributing to the peace and security of the country, in dissipating some formidable dangers and in inaugurating such reforms and improvements in its administration as the time and the circumstances of the case either permitted or required. Of one thing at all events I am certain : we have done a great deal more in these directions than anybody imagines.

The first place is here assigned to what we may call foreign policy, and the second place to the reforms and improvements in administration which the speaker had inaugurated. Surely the future historian will endorse this view of Lord Dufferin's work in India. Yet it does not accord with the horoscope forecast in 1884 by Lord Dufferin himself. Speaking as Viceroy-elect at a banquet given in his honour in Belfast, he said :

The days when great reputations were to be made in India are, happily perhaps, as completely past as those in which great fortunes were accumulated. Famous Indian proconsuls are no longer required by their superiors or compelled by circumstances to startle their countrymen by the annexation of provinces, the overthrow of dynasties, the revolutionizing of established systems, and all those dramatic performances which invariably characterize the founding and consolidation of new-born empires. . . . So convinced indeed I am of the truth of what I say, that I imagine that the greatest success and triumph I can obtain

are that, from the time that I depart from these shores and wave a grateful response to the farewell you are saying to me to-night, even the echo of my name may never be wafted to your ears until at the end of my official term I stand again among you, having won from the historian of the day no higher encomium or recognition than that my administration was uneventful, but that I had kept the empire entrusted to my guardianship tranquil and secure.

Man proposes, but a greater than man disposes. Notwithstanding this forecast, the administration of Lord Dufferin will be best remembered by the annexation of Burma and the overthrow of the dynasty of Ava. Indeed the recollection of this event has already been welded as it were to his very name. The Marquis of Dufferin and Ava is not the only Governor-General who, after disavowing not merely the intention, but we might almost say the possibility, of making additions to our Indian Empire, has come to propose the annexation of large territories. In the present case the inconsistency between expectation and fact is easily to be explained. It was impossible to find a policy which would keep the empire at once tranquil and secure. *Salus reipublice suprema lex.* It was necessary to obtain future security at the expense of immediate tranquillity. The security of our Indian Empire was the watchword of Lord Dufferin's policy. For this aim he embarked on the Burmese war. Not only was it desirable to put an end to the distracting influence of a disordered native state on the borders of a British province, nor merely incumbent on the dignity and good faith of the British Government to protect its subjects and demand redress for the wrongs they suffered, but it was also required for the very security of the empire to prevent a

foreign and possibly unfriendly European power from establishing itself on the upper waters of the Irrawaddy. It was the threatening interference of the French influence at Mandalay that precipitated a war for which the violent conduct of King Theebaw had already given ample justification. The overthrow of the king and the defeat of his regular army was easy—a mere fortnight's work. The king a prisoner, the organization of the country that depended on, and centred in, him was shattered; at the same time the king's armies were disbanded and scattered with arms in their hands to work what disorder they pleased over the country—an unexplored country as large as France, without roads, and covered with impracticable jungles. In the very nature of the case the settlement of this enormous province and the organization of its administration on British methods was necessarily a work of time. There was no wish on the part of Lord Dufferin's Government to study mere economy in the task, or, using his own phrase, to do the business "on the cheap". On the contrary, the civil and military authorities in the new province were again and again pressed to use more money, more officers, more troops, more police. Success, it is true, was not immediate. But notwithstanding checks and disappointments, the late Viceroy may be congratulated on the results achieved before he left India in the matter of tranquillizing what was the old kingdom of Ava and of furnishing it with all the appliances of a civilized state. Some small dacoit bands still remain to be disposed of, and the administration of the revenue may still admit of considerable improvement. The Budget of last March shows that it is improving fast. The railway is already open to Mandalay, and more roads and railways are being made or to be made. The worst difficulties now remaining in this part of the empire are not chiefly those which were in contemplation at the outbreak of the Burmese war. The wild tribes

inhabiting the broken country between the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy with its great tributary the Chindwin, have to be dealt with and brought into the network and system of the empire. Our relations with the Shan States, once subordinate to the Burmese king and now feudatory to the Government of India, have to be determined and enforced; the boundary between our territories and the Chinese districts on the north, and Siam and possibly French territory on the east, have yet to be settled; the independent border tribes must be made to respect our rights and authority; the mineral and agricultural wealth of the new countries brought under our sway, of which the ruby mines are but one instance, has to be opened up; then there is the question of trade with China and the importance of tapping, by a railway if possible, the wealth of the Chinese provinces of Yunan and Z'chuen.

It is a far cry from the Irrawaddy to the Murghab. But on the latter, as well as on the former river, formidable dangers have to be dissipated; and there, too, Lord Dufferin may fairly be congratulated on the state of affairs he has helped to establish. If a strong and friendly Afghanistan has long been the avowed aim of our Afghan policy, it has only been attained in the last few years. Much may be said against the present Amir of Afghanistan. His is not a character to be proud of in the person of "our faithful ally". We may chafe against his trade-regulations which almost forbid the entrance of our manufactures into his dominions. But no one can fail to recognize that his government is, all things considered, a strong one; it is also a fortunate one—fortunate perhaps because it is strong. Had he been less prompt in dealing with his difficulties as they arose, he might well have been overwhelmed by them. As it was, he disposed of the Ghilzai insurgents before his rival, Ayoob Khan, escaping from Teheran, appeared on

the scene as a formidable leader of the discontented. And Ayoob Khan was safely put away before Ishak Khan broke out into rebellion. Now, with Ishak Khan a refugee in Russian dominions, and the other principal members of his family safe under British surveillance, the Amir is more firmly seated in his empire than he ever was. His subjects respect while they fear, and possibly hate, his stern rule. Meanwhile the British Government, whose subsidies and grants of arms have supplied him with the sinews of his power, have no reason to doubt his fidelity. That Abdurrahman Khan, once a refugee and a pensioner of Russia, should prove not only a strong ruler of a united Afghanistan, but also a consistent and loyal upholder of the British connection, is more than could have been expected, except by the most sanguine, eight years ago.

The creation of a strong, united, loyal Afghanistan has been one point gained; the delimitation as far east as the Oxus of the boundary between Afghanistan and Russian territory has been another. It is true that dangers from Russia have not thus been swept away. But at any rate the danger of insidious unauthorized advance towards Herat or Cabul has been much diminished. The new Afghan boundary on the north-west, agreed upon by the British and Russian Governments, is not a scientific frontier from any point of view; but it is a *defined* frontier, the violation of which must be an evident aggression and an infringement of treaty-rights. All this is distinctly to the advantage of the Indian Government. But it is not everything. An artificial boundary such as this cannot stay Russia's legions when aggression and the infringement of treaty-rights are her avowed aim. If Russia ever determines to attack England in India, neither the present arrangement as to the boundary nor the strength of the Amir's army or his fortifications will be a serious obstacle to her inva-

sion. This at least has been the view of Lord Dufferin's Government. To secure India from the possibility of actual invasion, to put her in a position to strike a blow if required in defence of her acknowledged interests in the north of Afghanistan, this was evidently their urgent duty. It would have been to court danger to leave the road open to invasion, and Herat and the north of Afghanistan within Russia's grasp, without any likelihood of defence or retaliation. *Si vis pacem, para bellum.* To this end the Indian Government under Lord Dufferin have worked silently, vigorously, and effectually. The strengthening of the Amir's power has been one means adopted. The huge system of frontier railways and coast and frontier defences, estimated to cost nearly nineteen millions of pounds, of which about twelve millions have already been expended, has been another. The frontier defence system may be summed up in three words—communications, fortifications, and readiness in mobilization. The frontier roads and railways when complete will allow troops and material to pass rapidly to the front from the great depôts of the Punjab and Scinde, and also to concentrate directly from the whole line of frontier at any point that may be threatened. The fortifications are confined to a few important points, Rawal Pindi, Attock (the Indus-crossing on to which most of the passes from Afghanistan debouch), Jumrood, and Quetta. These are to be or have been made impregnable. If more fortifications are desired, they will probably be situated so as to command the western entrances of the Khyber, Gomul, and Kurram passes, just as Quetta commands the further end of the Bolan. Quetta is at present the real key of the system of defence. It is there that any serious attack is most to be expected; it is from Quetta that any counter move against the Russian power in Central Asia is likely to be undertaken. The last barrier, the Kwaja Amram range, which separates

Quetta from Candahar, is now being tunnelled, and the tunnel once complete, the extension of the railway to the important commercial and strategic centre of Candahar will be only a matter of a few weeks' work after the extension is ordered. The necessary plant is said to be already in store at Quetta.

Against attacks from the sea the rich capitals of India have also been guarded by well-planned defence-works, so far as their situations allow.

The Government, as the latest Indian Budget bears witness, are still working at a scheme of mobilization which will allow two army corps to proceed at once to the front fully equipped. To make it possible to have these army corps ready for war it has been necessary to add nineteen thousand native and ten thousand British soldiers to the Indian Army. This, which means an addition of about two millions of pounds to the expenditure of the Indian Government, has been done in the face of financial difficulties. But this is not the only addition that has been made to our Indian forces. By the initiation of a system of reserves several thousands more of trained soldiers will be ready to be called out for active service. The volunteer system has been also extended, and the force now numbers over fourteen thousand efficient volunteers. To supply the reserves with officers, a register is kept of those who have retired and are likely to be available on emergency. Nor is this all. Measures have been taken for still further strengthening the Indian garrisons by utilizing the armies of the Native States. Before Lord Dufferin left India he was able to announce that Government, while declining to accept the pecuniary contributions which native chiefs had so loyally offered towards the cost of frontier defence, would accept the offer, if it took the form of organizing, equipping, and training a portion of their troops in such a manner as to render them capable of acting efficiently by the side of the troops of the Govern-

ment of India. A beginning is to be made with the loyal and warlike armies of the Punjab States, of which Patiala is the chief. The use of feudatory troops is no new experiment in Indian history, nor has it ever been allowed to become obsolete. The troops of our great northern feudatory, Cashmere, were even last year used in our campaign against the Hazara tribes in the Black Mountain, and they may again be used not only in such expeditions, but also in preserving, tranquillizing, and guarding the passes north of the Upper Indus. Indeed, Gilgit is even now reported to be garrisoned by Cashmere regiments. If the matter be taken up actively by the Native States, it is possible that a very considerable reinforcement may be supplied to the Indian army without any serious additional charge to Indian revenues. But apart from the actual increase of men to our Indian army, there is a further increase of efficiency acquired by the re-armament that has been or is being carried out, as again the last Budget bears witness, under a decision of Lord Dufferin's Government.

But if India is to be ready at a moment's notice to encounter the northern giant, it must have its hands freed from other entanglements. While there is time, all petty frontier difficulties must be swept away. Perhaps it has been some such feeling as this that has precipitated some, at least, of the late petty frontier wars and expeditions which Lord Salisbury has described as the fringe of surf caused by the rising tide of civilization beating against the rocks of barbarism. The Zhob Valley, the Black Mountain or Hazara, and the Sikkim Expeditions, besides the smaller expeditions among the Shan States, or against the Kachyens, the Chins, and the Lushais, may be taken as illustrating the desire of the Indian Government to settle in quiet times frontier questions, which otherwise might grow serious and demand attention at an inopportune moment. At any rate it will be to



the advantage of India if, when the time comes for a great effort, she is not distracted by petty quarrels elsewhere, and can concentrate her efforts on the main danger.

It is by his foreign, external, and military policy that Lord Dufferin's Viceroyalty has been made most conspicuous. But in what may be called his foreign internal policy, that is in his dealings with the independent Native States in India, Lord Dufferin has also left a lasting impress of his rule. The loyalty of the chiefs has undoubtedly been strengthened, and has found more energetic expression than it ever has before. At the rumours of war with Russia, offers of personal service, troops, beasts, and stores were generously made on every side by these feudatories. Then came the celebration of the Queen's jubilee which brought so many of the chiefs to England, and which called forth the most enthusiastic display of loyalty in every Native State in India. Then came the offers of aid towards the defence of the frontier, and the pronouncement of Lord Dufferin that the Indian Government would view with favour the maintenance by the States of efficient bodies of troops to serve as contingents to the Indian army. The loyalty of the native princes and their confidence in the policy of the Indian Government have been increased by the restoration to Scindia of his great historic fortress of Gwalior, which had been garrisoned by the British forces since the Mutiny. The death of three rulers of the old school, in Cashmere, Gwalior, and Indore, has also given more vigour to British influence in these important centres. The new chiefs of Cashmere and Indore are not all that could be wished. In Gwalior, however, the state of affairs shows a very great improvement in every way; and one act of the Gwalior Council of Regency in lending to the British Government three and a-half millions of the treasures stored by the late Maharaja, advisable as it was economically, has also been advantage-

ous to the supreme Government in strengthening its hold over its great feudatory. Gwalior has thus given a pledge to fortune. Before leaving the Native States it is worth while to refer to a social reform of some importance which has been carried out in the states of Rajputana, and which is likely to be imitated elsewhere. In Rajputana the chiefs, under the influence of English education if not of English officers, have adopted measures for curtailing the customary ruinous expenditure on marriage and funeral ceremonies, and for checking infant marriages. If put into practice, this reform is likely to be an unmixed boon. Its acceptance, at any rate, is a sign of the times, an indication that the leaven of western civilisation is working where it might least be expected.

Before turning to Lord Dufferin's domestic policy we may note what has been done in his term of office for British and British-Indian trade and influence in the dominions of China and of Persia. It is true that Mr. Macaulay's proposed mission to Tibet for the purpose of opening trade with that vast unexplored region proved abortive. Still something was done by the agreement with China on the Burmese question to commit that power to a promise eventually to facilitate trade between India and Tibet, and between Burma and the south-western provinces of China. It may therefore be hoped that by the final settlement of the Sikkim question Tibet will agree to abandon, at any rate in part, her policy of obstruction to British-Indian trade and intercourse. Notwithstanding the hostilities between the Tibetans and our Indian forces, the relations between India and China are decidedly friendly, and the policy of Lord Dufferin, which has in the face of the Burmese and Sikkim difficulties maintained this feeling, may be considered decidedly successful. In Persia again, a distinct advantage to British, though not exclusively British, trade has been obtained by the open-



ing of the lower reaches of the Karun, the only navigable river in Persia, to foreign shipping. This gain is attributed to the diplomacy of the present British Minister at Teheran, since whose appointment English influence at the Persian capital is said to have considerably increased. The Shah has shown some disposition to encourage trade not only by the opening of the Karun, but also by a decree securing, so far as royal decrees can secure them, the rights of property in his dominions. The future must decide how far Persia will be able to go in this course of developing her resources by encouraging the introduction of European enterprise and European capital. Such a course affords the best hope of her own continued independence under the pressure of the Russian Empire that threatens her from the north. It may be hoped that this view will be impressed on the Shah during his present visit to Europe.

The energy of Lord Dufferin's foreign policy undoubtedly drew to itself too large a share of the vital sap not to stunt in some degree the growth of other branches of administration. His Burmese war and other military expeditions, the defence-works, the increase of the army, and the fall of the rupee have cost the Government of India since 1886 no less than thirty millions of pounds. In such a state of things, administrative reforms, which meant increased expenditure—and what reforms do not have this corollary?—had to be scanned with the severest eyes. The first object of Lord Dufferin's Government was to make two ends meet. This was only actually attained in one year of his rule, though in the present year again equilibrium is anticipated. The deficits have amounted to about six millions in the past five years. Meanwhile nine millions have been obtained by abolishing the Famine Relief and Insurance Grant, from the increase of the salt-tax, the imposition of an income-tax and a duty on petroleum. Only a small portion of the defence-works

has been paid for from borrowed funds. That no more had to be borrowed is due in great measure to the general improvement of the revenues and to the economies effected by a policy of severe retrenchment. Seldom has the pruning knife been so vigorously exercised as it was by the roving Committee on Reduction of Expenditure.

Perhaps the most open to criticism of the financial arrangements of Lord Dufferin's Government have been the interferences, required it may be by the exigencies of imperial finance, with the balances belonging to the Provincial Governments. Those governments that have laid by most have offered most to the appropriator's hand, and economy has thus been discouraged. However, the new provincial contracts, which we hope may not be infringed, are satisfactory in their decentralizing tendency. Local expenditure will more and more have to be met by local taxation and local revenues.

The Committee on Reduction of Expenditure was one out of a number of enquiries, by special officers, by committees, and by commissions, that characterized Lord Dufferin's rule. The organization of the army, education, the condition of the people, the public service, and the administration of excise and of the forests in various provinces have all been the subject of investigation. The most important enquiry was that of the Public Service Commission, which has recommended measures for throwing open to native candidates a larger proportion of the higher administrative appointments, especially in the judicial department, which are now almost wholly filled by Europeans. At least three hundred posts now reserved for the Covenanted Civil Service are proposed to be included in the provincial establishments, and will therefore be open to native candidates.

One other Commission which took place in England may also be mentioned for the success achieved in it by Lord Dufferin's Government. It was certainly owing to the influence

of the Indian representative that the Royal Commission that inquired into the recent changes in the relative values of the precious metals recommended the adoption, by international agreement, of measures calculated to bring about a stable ratio between gold and silver. Some such international agreement is the only escape the Indian Government can see from the ever-increasing loss caused by the ever-falling rupee.

The chief influence of Lord Dufferin on domestic policy must be sought in another field. It is to be seen in the change he helped to bring about in public opinion, in the soothing power he exerted over race-antipathies, and in the direction he gave to the popular movements of Young India.

When he came to India he had a difficult task to perform. The public atmosphere was heavily charged with electricity. The popular enthusiasm displayed in bidding farewell to Lord Ripon showed more than partiality for the departing Viceroy; it indicated also a feeling of exultation in the native mind. It had not been so much the measures which Lord Ripon's Government had proposed, as the phrases by which he had recommended them to public favour, that had irritated and alarmed the English in India, while making the educated classes of natives so exultant. The latter hoped and expected they knew not what. It was impossible but that the new Viceroy should disappoint them. On the other hand, the Anglo-Indians were in no mood to make the new ruler's position easy. Echoes could still be heard of the shrieks of passion and scorn that had found utterance in the clamour over the Ilbert Bill. Seldom had the prejudices and dislikes of rulers and ruled in India been so painfully roused. Neither party were in a disposition to allay their feelings of animosity towards the other. Before Lord Dufferin left India, a change had passed over the spirit of the dream. The bitterness, wrath, and evil speaking had been allayed. The improvement

was effected not so much by what the Governor-General did, as by what he refrained from doing. He avoided adding fuel to the fire. He tried to turn the public mind to other topics, especially to schemes of social improvement, on which all parties could be united. He used all opportunities of turning men's attention to other objects, to measures of practical utility instead of to political controversy. His legislation to amend the rent-law in Bengal, in the Punjab, and in Oude; his enquiries into the condition of the people; his manifestoes on behalf of sanitation and of the moral education of the people,—all tended in this practical direction. To neither of the parties concerned in the late altercations did he show special favour. His partiality, if he showed any, was directed to the Mahomedans, a third party, who had held aloof from the strife. Almost every act and expression of his Government tells how much he deprecated the irritation of animosity between class and race, and political agitation. It was especially evident in the manner in which he dealt with the Indian National Congress. He did not declare war on it; he did not treat it with scorn; to some extent he even patronized it. By advice, by example, and by suggestion, he tried to turn its energies into channels where he thought native congresses might do unmixed good. The amelioration of the condition of Indian women was a social reform which he thought they might well pursue. Could there have been a stronger and better example in this line than the institution of Lady Dufferin's Association, an institution which may be expected to have a lasting political as well as social influence? Again, a National Congress might afford real help and be a genuine benefit to the people by taking up the social and economic question of the poor. The Government inquiry into the problem was an appeal to them to help where their help would be gladly accepted. The appeal was in vain. Is it strange that Lord Dufferin

was disappointed with the National Congress, that in his last solemn speech before he left India he raised his voice in warning and in advice to its leaders—warning and advice which, it may be added, have not been without some good effect? He had faults to find with their claims, with their aims, and with their methods: with their claims, for they arrogated to themselves the title of a National Representative Assembly, whereas they were far from representing the “voiceless millions” of India, but represented only a “microscopic minority” of the educated classes, who were themselves the product of the foreign system of education introduced by the British Government. It was impossible to allow their claim to speak in the name of the people, if indeed there can be said to be an Indian people when India contains one hundred and eight different languages. He quarrelled, too, with their aims, because they turned aside from questions how they might reform the social habits and customs of India to agitations for representative government, for which India was not ripe. Above all he quarrelled with their methods.

It is (he said) a still greater matter of regret to me that the members of the Congress should have become answerable for the distribution, as their officials have boasted, amongst thousands and thousands of ignorant and credulous men of publications animated by a very questionable spirit, and

whose manifest intention is to excite the hatred of the people against the public servants of the Crown in this country. Such proceedings as these no Government could regard with indifference, nor can they fail to inspire it with misgiving at all events of the wisdom of those who have so offended. Nor is the silly threat of one of the chief officers—the principal secretary, I believe—of the Congress, that he and his congress friends hold in their hands the keys, not only of a popular insurrection, but of a military revolt calculated to restore our confidence in their discretion, even when accompanied by the assurance that they do not intend for the present to put those keys into the locks.

It was not that Lord Dufferin viewed with disfavour the desire of the educated classes of India to take a more active share in the administration of their country; on the contrary, in the speech just quoted he was able to indicate that he had submitted to the Home Government suggestions for admitting more native members into the legislative councils and into the general administration of India. But anything like the supersession of England's supreme control of public affairs, anything like the establishment of a parliamentary system and democratic methods of government, was not, he said, “a further step in advance, but a very big jump into the unknown”. From any such movement Lord Dufferin shrank in horror. And he was right.

## HOLLAND AND HER LITERATURE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

It is at great epochs in national history, when a people has just emerged victorious from some struggle for life in which its spirit has been stirred to its inmost depths, that we are accustomed to look for those exceptional outbursts of intense, many-sided activity which have occurred at rare intervals in the annals of the world, and of which the Periclean age at Athens affords at once the greatest and most familiar example. All the noblest capabilities and qualities which have hitherto lain dormant in the race have been called into action during the storm and stress of conflict, amidst dangers braved and sufferings endured in defence of some great cause; and the quickening impulse which has been sent thrilling through the veins, and which has made the pulses to throb with the flush of effort and the eagerness of hope, penetrates into every department of thought and action, until the world stands amazed at the spectacle of multitudinous energy which seems to animate all ranks and urge them on to great achievements.

Such an epoch was that in which, after their successful revolt against the tyranny of Philip II. and the Inquisition, the United Netherlands reached the zenith of their prosperity and renown. If ever there were a struggle in which the very fibre of a people was strained to the breaking-point, it was that in which this confederation of seven insignificant provinces, without cohesion, without any settled form of government or supreme central authority, without army or navy, weak in everything save in their own stern and unflinching resolve and in the inexhaustible resources of one man's ready brain

and dogged pertinacity of purpose, resisted and finally shattered the overwhelming strength of Spain. The story of the prolonged agony of the unequal contest has often been told, and has in our own times been made familiar to English readers by the vivid and picturesque narrative of Motley. It is not necessary to do more than mention such incidents as the execution of Egmont and Horn, the horrors of the Spanish Fury at Antwerp, the terrible deeds attending the capture of Naarden and of Haarlem, and above all the ever-memorable defence and relief of Leyden, to bring before mind and memory the presentment of a contest which for intense dramatic interest yields to none which have been recorded by the pen of the historian. The thrifty traders, the industrious phlegmatic peasantry, the sturdy fishermen, of whom the bulk of the population of the Northern Netherlands was composed, were baptized with a veritable baptism of blood and of fire; and they passed through the furnace of affliction to come forth with faculties braced and elevated, a new-born nation knit together by the memory of common sufferings and common triumphs.

The murderous deed of Balthazar Gérard could not undo the great work which his victim had already accomplished. William the Silent lived long enough not only to lay firmly the foundations of the Dutch Republic, but to leave behind him successors trained in his school, who were qualified to carry on the task of raising on those foundations a stately edifice. It is not my intention to dwell here upon the military successes of his famous son Maurice, the first general of his age, or upon the

statecraft by which John of Barneveldt secured in the cabinet the results which had been won upon the field. A quarter of a century had yet to pass after the assassination of William before Spain, by agreeing to a twelve years' truce, was compelled to acknowledge the practical independence of the United Netherlands. But during these years, though war was being waged against all the resources of a mighty power, the crisis of suffering and of danger had passed away. The scientific skill of their young general kept the military operations for the most part outside the borders of the Provinces. The dash and enterprise of the bold mariners of Holland and Zealand drove the enemy's fleets from the sea, and carried the terror of the Dutch name to the most distant and outlying portions of Philip's unwieldy empire. Meanwhile in the Netherlands themselves the spirit of the people rose, trade grew and prospered, and all the arts and accomplishments of civilization and of culture took root, blossomed and flourished. The half-century which followed the conclusion of the truce with Spain has been rightly named the Golden Age of Holland.<sup>1</sup> In this period not only did she attain the summit of her political greatness, and even for a time hold acknowledged supremacy, as the first of maritime, colonial and commercial Powers, but she was likewise the most learned State of Europe, and famous for the scholars, philosophers, theologians and men of scientific renown who filled her academies or took refuge within her hospitable boundaries. Within these same fifty years lived and worked all those great painters whose names are familiar to every lover of art, and who by their technical dexterity and rare delicacy of finish have given to the Dutch school of painting, in certain special departments and in its own peculiar style, a character of unrivalled excellence. It

was a period at once of general enlightenment and refined taste. The love of music was widespread, and, alike as composers and executants, the musicians of the Netherlands were acknowledged to be the first of their time; indeed it was from its home in the Low Countries that the art of modern music spread into Italy and Germany, and thence through the whole of Europe. The stage was popular and well supported. The Netherlands had always been distinguished for their love for scenic representations, and the new theatre of Amsterdam became renowned for the splendour and completeness of its arrangements and the ability of its actors. Such indeed was their fame, that travelling companies of Dutch players, who visited the chief cities of Germany, Austria, and Denmark, found everywhere a ready welcome and reaped a rich reward; while at Stockholm for a time a permanent Dutch theatre was established. Books of every kind, issued by a press absolutely free and unshackled, met with numerous and appreciative readers. Many of these were editions of the classics, or learned treatises in the Latin tongue on scientific or controversial subjects; many, but by no means all. The native language, shaking off the trammels of medievalism, had in the hands of a succession of great writers been cultivated and developed until it had attained a flexibility, copiousness, and finish far in advance of the sister dialects of Germany; and a literature arose, notable even in that era so rich in great literatures.

That the poetical treasures which it contains have in later times been overlooked and ignored, is due simply to the fact that the fall of the Dutch Republic from its temporary and untenable position of influence involved the decadence and neglect of the Dutch language. Holland and her tongue were alike destined to become provincial. But while the famous achievements of her admirals and statesmen are written large upon the

<sup>1</sup> The name of the dominating Province of Holland is generally used as signifying the Confederation of the United Provinces.

pages of the history of Europe, the works of her poets have remained unknown, save to the very few, in the obscurity of an oblivion, which even the critical minuteness and comprehensive survey of a Hallam or a Schlegel have failed to penetrate or to illumine.

"It has been the misfortune of the Dutch," wrote Hallam, "a great people, a people fertile of various ability and erudition, a people of scholars, theologians and philosophers, of mathematicians, of historians, of painters, and, we may add, of poets, that these last have been the mere violets of the shade and have peculiarly suffered by the narrow limits within which their language has been spoken or known." Yet he in no way attempts to supply the omission which he acknowledges. A few meagre details, drawn from second-hand sources, are all the account that he vouchsafes of what he has himself styled *The Golden Age of Dutch Literature*; while Schlegel in his *History of Literature* does not even deign to treat the subject directly, but contents himself, while commenting upon the writings of Opitz, with the remark: "He (Opitz) more immediately attached himself to the genius of the Dutch, who, at that time, possessed a Hugo Grotius, and were not only the most learned and enlightened of all Protestant States, but had also made considerable progress in poetical pursuits and were in possession of native tragedies, modelled after the antique, long prior to the celebrated tragic poets of France in the reign of Louis XIV." The two great critics agree in their estimate of the learning and enlightenment of the Holland of the seventeenth century: they agree in their statement that this highly cultured community possessed a native literature of unknown excellence; and both abstain from a personal study of poetical works which, through circumstance, if not through lack of merit, had failed to attain a European reputation.

Oppressed as they were by the enor-

mous magnitude of the task they had undertaken, Hallam and Schlegel were possibly justified in thus shrinking from adding to labours already great enough to try the powers of the most indefatigable student; but surely this very fact renders it the more imperative upon others, not thus burdened, to see that there should be no gap, no *terra incognita* in our knowledge of one of the most important and interesting epochs in the history of Letters.

With the political history of the United Provinces in the hey-day of their prosperity the world is familiar. The names of the great Stadholders of the House of Orange, Maurice, Frederick Henry, and William III.; of the great Pensionaries, Barneveldt and De Witt; of the great Admirals, Van Tromp and De Ruyter,—have each their niche of fame not merely in the annals of their fatherland, but in the annals of their time. Dutch art and Dutch artists require no one to blazon their renown, for the language which they employ appeals to every eye and needs no interpreter. But the poetry of Vondel and his contemporaries has for two centuries and a half remained for well-nigh all, save natives of Holland, a sealed book.

Yet not for one, but for many reasons this should not be. The claims of the Dutch poets to a place in the history of the literature of the seventeenth century should be assessed, not by the position which Holland and her literature now hold in the estimation of Europe, but by the position which they occupied at the time when the United Netherlands were the first of maritime Powers, and the Dutch were the bankers and carriers of the world. The long lifetime of Vondel covered the entire period known as the *Golden Age of Dutch Literature*, and he may be regarded as, in a peculiar sense, the impersonation of his country's highest poetic inspiration. He was the contemporary of Shakspeare and Milton, of Lope de Vega and Calderon, of Corneille and Racine;



and that which Shakspeare and Milton are to the literature of England, that which Lope de Vega and Calderon are to the literature of Spain, that which Corneille and Racine are to the literature of France, such is Vondel to the literature of Holland. He stands forth, as one of the representative Men of Letters of his time; and no study or survey of the literature of that time can be pronounced satisfactory or complete which denies without examination the value of his work, and ignores his pretensions to poetic fame. He has a claim, whether we regard him from the wider point of view as a European poet, or from the narrower as merely a Dutch writer. Yet Vondel is but the central figure amidst a crowd of writers; and among these are some highly distinguished as literary men, who at the same time played a considerable part in the social and political history of their time.

The brilliant and genial Hooft, whose castle of Muiden was for a quarter of a century the home of the Muses, the resort of all that was most cultured, learned and refined among the higher intelligence of Holland, was himself a dramatist of distinction; a writer of some charming love-songs and lyrics; a historian of the first rank; a master of prose, whose letters are models of a studied, though at times somewhat affected, epistolary style, and afford a perfect mine of information to the student.<sup>1</sup> The most popular and most widely read of all Dutch poets, whose writings<sup>1</sup> are as simple and unsophisticated in their diction as they are rich in quaint fancy, wise and pure in their precepts, admirable in their sound sense, and manly and large-hearted in their view of human life, was one of the prominent Netherlands statesmen of his time, for twenty years Grand Pensionary of Holland, and twice sent as Ambassador Extraordinary from the States General to England. Essentially

the poet of the people, amongst whom to this day he is familiarly called "Father Cats", his works are to be found beside the Bible in well-nigh every Dutch homestead. Constantine Huyghens was a man of a different type. Courtier, nobleman, diplomatist, secretary and counsellor to three successive Princes of Orange, proficient in almost all languages ancient and modern, acquainted with every branch of knowledge, an admirable musician and composer, the writing of verses was to him a pastime of the leisure hours of a lifetime crowded with other interests and activities. His numerous short poems, at once lively and didactic, fastidious in style and pithy in expression, are highly interesting; but they are interesting chiefly in this, that they reveal to us the reflections and sentiments of a man versed in affairs and a favourite of courts, yet with a mind endowed by Nature with the finest faculties and tastes, which the study and application of years had enhanced and matured. In Brederoo, a man ignorant of any language save his mother-tongue, but full of native humour and originality, we have the only counterpart in Dutch literature to the Jan Steens and Brouwers of contemporary art. He is the poet of low-life, and his comedies are written for the most part in the rude dialect of the fishmarket and the street. Nevertheless they present us with veritable pictures of the life and manners of old Amsterdam; and his songs, full of energy and natural feeling, show that had not the dissipations and disappointments of a wayward youth brought his career to an untimely close he might have attained to high poetic distinction. The poems, published at Amsterdam under the titles of "The Merry Song Book," "the Great Fountain of Love," and "Meditative Song Book," are alike remarkable for the varied and harmonious cadence of the verse, and for genuine power of expression and imagery. They reveal beneath the

<sup>1</sup> There is an excellent edition of them in four vols., by Van Vloten, Leyden, 1857.

rough, and at times coarse and licentious exterior, glimpses of a nature of fine susceptibilities and of almost womanly sensitiveness.

It is not possible here to enter into any detail respecting the works of these great Dutch writers, or even to mention the names of many others of minor fame. But no sketch, however slight, which attempts to portray the leading figures of this remarkable period, must forget to assign amongst them a prominent position to the beautiful Maria Tesselschade Visscher. If but a fraction of what is said in her praise by the crowd of distinguished admirers who burnt incense at her shrine be true, she must be considered one of the most admirable and accomplished types of womanhood, that the imagination of the poet or the pen of the romancer has ever devised,—a very vision of sweetness and light. She had indeed exceptional opportunities. Daughter of the celebrated Roemer Visscher, a poet, distinguished both for wit and learning, whose house was for many years the rendezvous of literary society, she daily met as a child under her father's hospitable roof all that were best worth knowing among the many gifted men who made Amsterdam their home in those brilliant days. Nor was this her only privilege. Her sister Anna, ten years older than herself, under whose fostering care after their mother's death her years of childhood passed, was a woman of unusual erudition, a poetess of no mean merit, honoured by her contemporaries, according to the fashion of the age, with the title of the Dutch Sappho. The young maiden repaid her for her motherly tenderness and solicitude by the quickness with which she imbibed her instructions, and the eagerness with which she set herself to tread in her footsteps. The pupil indeed was destined soon to surpass the teacher, and the fame of the wise Anna to pale before that of the beautiful Tesselschade.

All the first literary men of her time were, not figuratively only but often literally, among her admirers. Hooft and Huyghens, Barlaeus and Brederoo wooed in vain for her affections; Vondel and Cats with less ardour perhaps, but equal admiration, offered rich tributes of homage to her personal charms as well as to her almost incredible proficiency in every branch of art and culture. Her attainments were indeed wonderful. The greater part of her poetical works, including her much-praised translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, have perished, but amongst the scanty remains is found her "Ode to the Nightingale", a lyric bearing some curious points of resemblance to and not unworthy to be compared with Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark". She could play with skill upon the harp, and the beauty of her voice and the art with which she used it have been celebrated by all her contemporaries. She was moreover dexterous in tapestry and embroidery work, and in painting, carving, and etching upon glass. And with all this there seems to have been no trace of pedantry or affectation in her healthy and well-balanced nature. She never appears to have been carried away by the flood of flattery which surrounded her. She gave her heart and hand to none of the poets and courtiers who made love to her in polished stanzas, but to a plain sea-captain, with whom she passed a happy but too short married life in the seclusion of a provincial town, giving up for a time her literary and artistic pursuits for the sedulous discharge of her motherly and domestic duties. In widowhood she again fixed her abode in Amsterdam and, welcomed by the circle of her old friends, her bright and joyous presence once more became the soul of the society which continued to frequent the Castle of Muiden. Again the throng of suitors began to flock around her, but she remained faithful to the memory of the husband she had loved. She did not hold herself aloof from her literary friends,

and delighted to exercise her talents both as a solace to herself and for the gratification of others. Her heart however was in none of these things. Devotedly attached to her two daughters, her first and constant care was directed to their training and education; and when in their early youth they were removed from her by death, she found life no longer worth living, but, still in the prime of her powers, speedily followed them to the grave. The memory of a character so pure and flawless, in which the highest qualities of nature and art were so happily blended, should not lie buried in a forgotten tomb or enshrined in an unread literature. For no one can study the Dutch literature of the Golden Age without being struck by the wide and subtle influence which the captivating personality of Tessel-schade Visscher exercised over her contemporaries, or without himself feeling a thrill almost of affection for one who thus lights up the often dry and tedious records of a bygone time with radiant glimpses of "a perfect woman, nobly planned".

Dry and tedious a comprehensive study of the literature of any period must always be.

If we want (to quote the words of Mr. Stopford Brooke) to get a clear idea of any period, we must know all the poets small and great, who wrote in it and read them altogether. It would be really useful and delightful to take a single time and read every line of fairly good poetry in it and then compare the results of our study with the history of the time. Such a piece of work would not only increase our pleasure in all the higher poetry of the time we study, and the greater enjoyment of the poetry of any other time; it would also supply us with an historical element which the writers of history at the present day have so strangely neglected, the history of the emotions and passions which political changes worked and which themselves influenced political change; the history of the rise and fall of those ideas, which especially touch the imaginative and emotional life of a people and in doing so, modify the whole development.

To that marvel of history, the  
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Holland of the first half of the seventeenth century, are these sentences especially applicable. The historian of European politics tells us of her achievements as one of the leading states of the day and of her weight in the councils of nations. The historian of commerce dwells upon her mercantile enterprise, her wealth, her East and West India Companies, her colonies, her banking system, the thrift and industry of her people. The historian of learning points to her with pride, as the chosen home of such world-renowned scholars, jurists and philosophers, as Lipsius and Scaliger, Barlaeus and Heinsius, Gronovius, Salmasius and the Vossii, of Grotius, Spinoza and Descartes. The historian of science records the discoveries and investigations of Christian Huyghens, the distinguished son of a distinguished father, to whose mechanical genius the astronomer and optician are so deeply indebted, and who was no less remarkable for the breadth of his theoretical generalizations than for his skill in the invention and manipulation of instruments. He tells of the permanent additions made to the science of mathematics by the studies of Simon Stevin; of the exhaustive and minute researches of Swammerdam into the habits and metamorphoses of insects, which form the basis of subsequent knowledge; of the life-long labours of Leeuwenhoek with the microscope, which resulted in the discovery of the *infusoria*, and in the amassing of vast stores of information concerning the circulation of the blood and the structure of the eye and brain; of Ruysch, Boerhaave and Tulp, anatomists and physicians of European reputation; of the discovery of the principle of the clock-pendulum by Christian Huyghens, of the telescope by Zachary Jens, of the microscope by Cornelius Drebbel; of the printing triumphs of the Elzevirs; of the maps of Blaeuw. And lastly the historian of art recounts the extraordinary fertility of this era in great Dutch painters, and enlarges with critical

discrimination upon the magical *chiaroscuro* of Rembrandt, the lifelike vigour of the portraits of Van der Helst and Franz Hals, the delicate finish of Gerard Dow and Terburg, the landscapes of Ruysdael and Hobbema, the cattle of Paul Potter and Cuyp, and the varied and particular excellences associated with the names of Jan Steen, Wouvermans, Brouwers, Pieter de Hoogh, Ostade, Van der Velde and many others. Of the outward and visible aspect of the Holland of the Golden Age, of the appearance, dress, external habits and customs of all classes of the population, the walls of the Rijks-museum at Amsterdam and of the Mauritshuis at the Hague offer us a full and faithful portraiture. But we still need to know something more if we wish to penetrate behind this outer presentment of names and deeds and forms and achievements, and discern the hidden springs of action, the motive forces of this exuberant national life. The works of the writers of a great past age are to some extent a faithful mirror in which its spirit is reflected, and to him who readeth therein with his eyes open its image is revealed. The pictured narrative of the historian, nay even the pictured canvas of the painter supply us at the best with but a counterfeit representation of the vanished past; to the student of its contemporary literature alone is a glimpse of the living reality afforded. The memories of the great men of former days are but too often the object either of indiscriminate partiality or of indiscriminate prejudice. The same man is represented as saint or sinner, hero or tyrant, according to the prepossessions and bias of the writer. Not that necessarily facts are glaringly, or even consciously misrepresented; but the imagination plays so large a part in the arrangement and colouring that the general effect is transformed, and instead of being presented with a faithful and life-like portraiture of

persons and events, we have a narrative, which to use the expression of Bolingbroke, is nothing but "an authorized romance", and is generally attractive and popular in exact proportion to its faultiness. History at its best is but incomplete and unsatisfying. It tells us something, it makes us wish for more. The figures which move across its page are, after all, but puppets guided and informed by the hand of the showman. We do not recognize in them men of like passions with ourselves; we perceive the outward form and gesture but we know little of the inner searchings of the heart, of their strivings, ideals, sympathies and sorrows. No one indeed can adequately reveal these things to us; they must be sought by ourselves. And much, at least, that will interpret to us the spirit of an age, if that age were fortunate in the production of great writers, can be found in the intelligent study of its literature.

Such an age pre-eminently was that which we have been considering. The annals of Holland in the seventeenth century are strewn thick with the records of famous men and famous deeds. Never with smaller means did any people achieve greater results or win distinction in so many ways as did the people of the Northern Netherlands in the "glorious days of Frederick Henry", and the story of what they did, and still more of how they did it, is extremely instructive, as well as impressive and romantic. Yet it can never be told in its completeness merely by the study of protocols and despatches, or by comparisons of statistics or by researches among musty state documents. These are but the dry bones of history; and he who would lay sinews and flesh upon them, must study likewise, and deeply, the contemporary literature which has come down to us in rich abundance, as a part of the living tissue of the times themselves.

GEORGE EDMUNDSON.

## SMALL DEER.

SMALL deer, in truth! The fisher for the lordly salmon will shoot out the lip: the happy man who has toiled (not in vain) the season through to lure the giant trout of Thames, will shake his head over my humble tale. But my little fish are sweet, and sweet is their dwelling-place.

It has been a glorious August day, and the sun is sloping westward through a cloudless sky as I leave the old Hall behind me. Leisurely I wend my way through the rolling park. On the high ground the grass is brown and sere; but in every little dale and dell the bracken grows thick, gladdening the eye with its fresh, bright, living green. Across the drive in front of me a rabbit glides noiselessly. A hundred yards to the right a branching antler rising above the fern shows where a buck is taking his rest in quietness and confidence, never broken by

The slow-hound's deep-mouthed note and huntsman's echoing horn.

Now stand on the bridge where the drive crosses, and gaze your fill on half a mile of open water, from the dark fir-wood to the beginning of yonder long spinney, that the stream threads from end to end in its devious course to the brimming river.

"Water, sir! there's not three inches. Stream! it's a ditch, I could hop across." True, that limber fly-rod and gorged pocket-book will do little service here. The two top joints, a yard of gut, and juicy worms are all we need.

Our tackle is soon put together, and we are at the end of the wood. Flashing over bright brown pebbles, the stream hurries forth, glad to escape from gloomy shades to light and air. Rushes grow thick on the high hollow banks, with here and there a fern

stretching its feathery fronds from side to side. You may set your fancy free, laugh, sing, whistle, shout, or swear, as the fancy takes you; but,—oh, lightly tread! for haply beneath your very feet the quarry lurks.

Here shall be my first cast! Noiselessly I drop the worm, and watch it with the eye of hope as it rolls swiftly down where beneath yonder hollow the stream runs like a mill-race in miniature, slightly coloured with the crumbling soil. Alas! no bite; and again and again the like ill-luck.

Aha, my friend, I can translate that vigorous ejaculation—rushes are not to be trifled with, and the graceful fern, with its serrated leaves, holds a gut-line like a vice. Put on another hook. I'll try my luck where the stream eddies round yonder mighty boulder, seven pounds if it is an ounce, that lies athwart its course.

A convulsive tug—the light rod bends like a bow, and with a turn of the wrist a pretty little trout in all the glory of his crimson-spotted livery is swung on the grass at my feet. The first fish, the first trout—there is magic in the word. What golden memories it conjures up! Memories of happy hours by lonely moorland burns in the sweet vale of Dove, of red-letter days in the lush water-meadows through which the Wind-rush winds its silent way. Keener than ever, I fish steadily down towards the bridge. Two more speckled beauties join their comrade in the spacious pocket of my old shooting-coat; a third shakes the hook from his mouth and leaves me sorrowing, but only for a moment. Is there not a noble pool just below the bridge; black, still, and deep, some three feet deep, into which the water pours, bubbling and foaming from a tiny cataract? Quickly my worm is launched into the rapids,



hangs for a moment among the stones, and then drops quickly into the tail of the pool. A bite indeed, the loose end of the line was almost twitched from my hand, and now to "do my spiriting gently."

Like lightning my fish dashes across the pool, seeking shelter under the roots of the old willow that overhangs the water. For one agonizing moment the line seems slack, but I feel him again, a mad rush down stream, a short sulk under the bank, and I

Take him up tenderly,  
Lift him with care—

a half-pounder at the very least.

Pocketing my fish, I walk quickly on. There are few likely places in the remaining open space, and these my friend has fished with much perseverance. He has lost another hook, but two pretty trout have restored his self-respect and temper. Elsewhere the stream runs clear as crystal over a sandy bottom. Ever and anon, as I pass, a dark form flits through the water, as though in mockery; but I pass the challenge by.

Arrived at the edge of the spinney I pause a moment. Who ever

Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

The west is all ablaze with tints that Turner would have loved to paint. The sun is setting gloriously. His last rays are lighting up the dark fir-wood, and the leaves of yonder giant oak glisten like burnished gold. Already there is a pleasant freshness in the air that tells of falling dew, and the gathering dusk warns me to lose no time.

In the fence, a hundred yards to the left, is a gap. Cautiously I scramble over, and work my way towards the stream, through a sea of fern breast-high. What a place for fairy tourists! It is the Wye in miniature; fern down to the water's edge, save where a stretch of mossy turf flanks some quiet little reach.

For the most part the banks are high and steep. Six feet below me the stream brattles along its rocky bed. There are a dozen tiny waterfalls, each with its duodecimo salmon-pool below it. The trees admit a solemn half-light. Not a twig stirs: all is silence, all is peace; save when my rustling footsteps startle a timid rabbit, or flush an old cock pheasant, who rises leisurely to settle again a few yards further on.

Slowly I stroll along, catching now a fish and now a stone, for the bottom is rocky, and has cost me much patience and hooks not a few. Half-way through the spinney the stream dives into a thicket of nut-bushes and is lost to view. In its hidden course is more than one fishy place, but never yet have I ventured there—with rod and line. To-day success has made me bold. Warily I grope my way; now thrusting the rod delicately through the tangled branches in front, now raising it aloft to elude the tenacious fern-leaves. Once, twice, I am caught and hung up, but reach the bank at last, unbroken.

Now, where the impetuous streamlet, dammed by a fallen log, swirls round all flecked with foam. Crawling to the edge I take the line 'twixt thumb and finger, and drop the baited hook, like a plummet, into the rapid just above. In a moment there comes a sharp twitch of the line. It is no place to dally with the prey. Keeping the point of the rod down, I draw the line sharply back, and trout the eighth joins his forerunners in my bulging pocket. There is no more to be done in the jungle, for the stream is literally smothered by the undergrowth. So I wriggle out of the thicket carefully, and keep a parallel to its course.

There is comparatively open ground again as I near the end of the spinney, and a complete change of scene.

The trees are sparse and stunted: tussocks of long, rank, tangled grass take the place of fern, and on many a patch of ground the silvery deer-moss warns me not to tread. Through this



dismal little swamp the stream flows between two flat banks with many a winding. Daylight is fading fast now; a white mist begins to rise, and great white moths flit, like ghosts, along the water-side. Not altogether a pleasant place to walk at dewy eve. But these few hundred yards of boggy stream have yielded me many a fish ere now.

My friend has come down the cross-side and joined me. He has made but one addition to his bag since we parted, and is inclined to be despondent. He will fish no more, but saunters along the opposite bank, watching my operations.

For some time the rod is plied in vain, and my friend, who has found more than one soft place, shows signs of turning tail. But I pick my way on to a little cape of firm ground, around which the stream sweeps with a strong current. Once more my fingers thrill to the electric twitch, and I swing a game troutling of some four ounces deftly on to the bank. In the next twenty yards another and yet another come to grass.

Then the watcher, roused to emulation, sets to work once more. But the ground gets worse and worse, and, thanks to the failing light, I have fathomed one moss-hole to the knee. There is a shout of triumph! My comrade has a fish, a good one doubtless, for his rod is bending double. But hapless wight, that careless step bewrays him! One mighty flounder, and he lies prone upon the moist earth. The point of his rod clutched in a convulsive grasp, flies upward as he falls, and he rises, mud-bedaubed, a sad and wrathful man, while his fish escapes with the hook and a yard of gut. Just one more cast with a new bait, my friend, and we will leave the treacherous spot, for we are a good

half-mile from the house, and shall scarce get back by daylight.

I lay my rod aside and, taking good heed to my steps, pursue a large moth, fluttering about hard by. He is soon caught, and fixed tenderly on the hook. Now to find a fitting place to essay his charms. Here is the very spot. Where that ancient alder, with roots thick grown with moss and fungi, flings its straggling branches over the slow sullen stream, eating its silent way through the rich, black crumbling earth.

Lightly the moth falls on the dark water and glides slowly down the sluggish stream. Its gossamer wings are soon dragged, and it begins to sink. I am on the point of taking it out, and seeking a fresh victim, when suddenly the calm surface is broken by a rise—the trailing line grows taut. A few convulsive struggles, and my fish is handsomely landed on the low, bare bank. He has taken the colour of his dwelling-place; dusky and dull of hue, he cannot compare in beauty with his brethren outside the spinney. But he is a gallant fish for all that, and, if my eye deceives me not, a good three-quarters of a pound.

Right loth am I now to quit the stream, though night is falling fast. But I tear myself away, regain the side, and we start at score upon our homeward trudge. The moon is rising, a crescent of pale gold, as we cross the park. Shapeless and dim in the twilight the great trees tower aloft like giant spectres. A late-feeding hare lurches leisurely away from our path; a bat almost brushes my cheek, as he flits by on noiseless wing. But no sound comes to break the solemn stillness of a world that seems mourning for the day that is dead.

## CRITICS IN COURT.

It was Gray's opinion that a bad verse was a better thing than the best observation made upon it. The opinion is valuable, for Gray not only lives with the poets; he is in the very front rank of critics, though he published no criticisms. On the other hand, Johnson, who published much acute and just criticism, with much also that was foolish and ill-tempered, thought more nobly of the critical soul. To refine the public taste, he said, was a public benefaction, and so far no one probably will disagree with him. "If bad writers were to pass under no reprehension," he asked, "what should restrain them?" And again: "All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgment". That again is not to be gainsaid, but there is clearly much virtue in the *when*. The truth is that the Court of Criticism has no legal existence. It is a self-appointed tribunal working on no settled principles and bound by no precedents. Any one may practise in it. "Criticism", observes Dick Minim's biographer, "is a study by which men grow important and formidable at a very small expense. The power of invention has been conferred by nature upon few, and the labour of learning those sciences which may by mere labour be obtained is too great to be willingly endured; but every man can exert such judgment as he has upon the works of others; and he whom nature has made weak and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of a Critic". In this court no one conceives himself obliged either by courtesy or custom to respect, much less to uphold the decision of his brother, be he never so learned. Freedom is of course a blessed thing,

but too much freedom is not always good for every man, and its result in this instance is not seldom as ridiculous as it is confusing. The critic is indeed not so much a baron of the Middle Ages exercising power of life and death over his own feudatories, as a robber-chief levying war wherever he feels himself strong enough to do so with impunity, on his neighbour robbers as well as on the defenceless peasantry. Or if this simile be thought too robust for him, let him be likened to the pariah dog of the East, which turns upon its fellow beast when better prey cannot be had.

It is little wonder that a stand should have been sometimes made against this tyranny; the wonder rather is that it should not have been more often made. It is true that upon bad writers only will censure have much effect, yet it is only half a truth. Censure will not harm good work, but it may give the workman many an uncomfortable hour. Pope, the most sensitive, and Scott, the most sensible of writers, were both annoyed by censure; yet upon their writings censure has not had much effect. And after all how small a part of the irritable race can even this half-truth avail to console! It is only natural, then, that in an age when the Passion of the Past has ceased to work, or at most lingers only in a few withered breasts themselves soon to become candidates for its regard, when scorn of the beliefs and sentiments, the institutions and practices of its fathers is considered the first necessity of noble mind, when he who

From the shadow of the globe would sweep  
into the younger day,

must ply his broom ruthlessly—at such a time it is, we say, but natural that

the divinity which once hedged round a critic should have gone the way of all other divinities. It is the age of æsthetical democracy as of political, and critics like kings must be taught to "ken there is a lith in their necks". The spectacle of another Byron paying compliments to another Gifford as the "monarch-maker in poetry", can be hardly more unlikely than—than the advent, shall we say, of another Byron? "Sire," said the French courtier to his king, when the Bastille was toppling down in flames that are not yet quenched, "Sire, this is not a revolt, but a revolution." Many a revolt has been headed against the critic's rule, and not always unsuccessfully; now there is a revolution, and a revolution by course of law. A second Daniel has come to judgment, and henceforth it is law in English land that the public good must not be benefited at the expense of the private individual.

To the ordinary lay mind, which has always found it hard to draw the necessary distinction between common law and common sense, this judgment has an almost boundless significance. Stretching far beyond the province of mere æsthetic criticism, it appears to embrace almost the whole social fabric, —and not to embrace it only, but to strike at its very core. Something of the same theory was indeed broached by that large-hearted senator who confided to an appreciative audience that they were not bound to obey the law beyond their own convenience. But between the interpretation of the law by an irresponsible member of Parliament and the law itself there is sometimes much difference. This member was in very truth no better than a critic, and, had any sufferer by his criticism chosen to seek redress, would probably have shared the critic's shift. But if this interpretation of the law by one of its chief officers is to hold good, surely the end of all things is at hand. For what may it not involve? Take one instance, —a simple one, within universal comprehension. The policeman — is not he maintained

for the benefit of the public good? Yet how often must he justify his maintenance at the expense of the private individual! There must be many private individuals who would gladly see those uncompromising and incorruptible critics, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Monro, laid by the heels for preserving the public good at their expense; and really, if what is to be sauce for the æsthetic goose is also to be sauce for the political gander, it is hard to see why their wish should not be gratified. To take another instance, which will touch the law-abiding Briton on his tenderest side; it is for the public good that we should have an Army, a Navy, Ministers of the Crown, even Judges; they can only be maintained at the expense of the private individual,—of the tax-payer, to wit. But these are matters too high for our dim layman's vision. Allegorically blind herself, Justice is often the cause of literal blindness in others who seek to penetrate her mysteries with unanointed eyes. In the presence of this inscrutable goddess we can but murmur to ourselves those touching lines which Mr. Clayden has reminded us were written by Samuel Rogers:

They who watch by her, see not; but she  
 sees,  
 Sees and exults—were ever dreams like  
 these!

There are, however, other sides of the question on which it may be possible for a layman to reflect with less chance of foolishness, and which are perhaps of more general interest to those good souls who would gladly obey the law in all things, when assured of understanding her commandments.

The particular occasion of this judgment was what is known in legal society as a theatrical case. There has been more than one such lately, and in each the aggrieved party contrived to secure not only the sympathy of the judge, but the more practical sympathy of the jury as well. Without entering into particulars, which might be tedious, it may be broadly said that

in each case the judge laid it down that adverse criticism within certain bounds was fair, and in each the jury decided that these bounds had been passed. It was in the last of these—in which the proprietor of a music-hall had sued the proprietor of a newspaper for publishing reflections on the morality of his entertainment—that this distinction was drawn between the public interests and the rights of the private individual.

The precise legal interpretation of the word *private* puzzles us at the outset. In his relation to the State every individual is in one sense private. The public good is the good of the State, and the State is a mighty sum made up of many myriads of units. Yet surely no individual can plead the privileges of privacy who comes forward in person to solicit the suffrages of the public. The artist, in whatever form of art he works, who earns his living by his skill, is from a purely commercial point of view as much a tradesman and stands on the same footing as the greengrocer or the hosier. Both are ready to supply certain goods for a certain price; the question between them and the public is whether the goods are worth the price asked for them. Whether the goods be pictures or potatoes, socks or sonnets, matters nothing so far as the essential terms of the bargain are concerned; but a court of law takes cognizance of the greengrocer's failure to supply a proper quality of potato, whereas the defaulting artist is tried in the court of criticism. The critic is, in short, an inspector of aesthetic weights and measures, or we may call him a sanitary inspector, if we please, or an inspector of nuisances. His misfortune is that he has no official standing; he has appointed himself, at his own peril. Artist and greengrocer are both private individuals up to a certain point, and as such have rights common to every human being in a civilized state of society. Their customers are concerned only with the quality of their wares; with the greengrocer's

religious opinions the public has no more to do than with the moral character of the poet's grandmother or his own relations to the tax-collector. Moreover the artist has certain sentimental rights, as they may be called, peculiar not to the individual but to the artist. Good art has a glory of its own, supreme and imperishable; bad art, when it offends no moral law, is not a crime against society. It may provoke us by its folly, or weary us by its insipidity; but it is not to be treated with the severity due to him who violates the laws of social order or endangers human life. So far it is right to say that criticism must not perform its office of purifying public taste at the expense of the individual; but when an artist voluntarily submits his work to the tribunal of public opinion, it is idle to warn that tribunal that it must pronounce no sentence likely to hurt the interests of the private individual. Johnson, somewhat brutally, observes that "the diversion of baiting an author has the sanction of all ages and nations". It is more lawful, he says, than the diversion of teasing other animals, "because for the most part he comes voluntarily to the stake". It is at any rate certain that the practice of criticism is of venerable antiquity, and that the public has never considered the man who tries to sell a bad picture or a bad book exempt from censure on the ground that he is a private individual.

In the mind of the law the whole question seems to turn on what constitutes fair criticism. In an action for libel brought by a bookseller who had been accused of selling immoral and foolish books Lord Ellenborough delivered himself of this judgment: "Liberty of criticism must be allowed, or we should have neither purity of taste nor of morals. Fair discussion is essentially necessary to the truth of history and the advancement of science. That publication, therefore, I shall never consider as a libel which has for its object not to injure the reputation of any individual, but to cancel mis-

representation of fact, to refute sophistical reasoning, to expose a vicious taste in literature, or to censure what is hostile to morality." From the antithesis of the last sentence it would seem that the learned judge used the word *vicious* in an æsthetic sense, and if this be so his ruling goes far; but then comes across our path the "reputation of the individual". A badly written or foolish book is æsthetically vicious, and its exposure should therefore tend to the purification of taste. Yet the exposure must also inevitably tend to injure the artistic reputation of its writer. It must in short be obvious that there can be no adverse criticism, provided of course it be true, which does not injure the reputation of the individual against whom it is directed, and, so far as it is designed to warn the public that the work offered to them for purchase is not worth their money, is not intended to injure it. It is in a word impossible entirely to separate the individual from his work. The individual lives by the sale of his work; if that sale be injured, the individual is injured.

This separation of the artist from his work is more impossible, it may be observed, in theatrical criticism than in any other. This department of criticism appears indeed to be governed by certain laws of its own, whose motives it is not easy to fathom,—unless we agree with those who maintain that they may be fathomed much too easily. To the uninitiated it seems at any rate as though it were often content to accept an actor for some other sake than his work's. But we have neither the right nor the wish to go behind the scenes. It is, however, certain that in criticizing the performance of an actor you must more or less consciously criticize his physical capabilities for the part, which are in fact—though it is a fact which seems to be strangely overlooked—three-fourths of his qualifications. It must be obvious that an actor with a harsh voice, an awkward manner, and an ungainly figure, whatever his intellec-

tual powers may be, can never satisfactorily present characters associated with the idea of personal charm, such as Romeo or Prince Hal or Charles Surface. In only one of the three cases aforesaid was the plaintiff an actor; but the British jurymen, with all his good qualities, is not a very nice reasoner, and we suspect that in what is vaguely known as a theatrical case the critic will very rarely get the benefit of the doubt. Of all professions an actor's stands in the closest personal relation to the individual; adverse criticism seems as it were to strike at the very man himself. We must remember, too, that our theatre gives a great degree of pleasure, and on the whole of innocent pleasure, to an immense number of persons whose æsthetic senses are not likely to be very seriously offended by the defects which annoy a critic. It must be obvious that an infinitesimal proportion of the crowds which throng our playhouses can carry a critical mind with them, fortunately for them as well as for the playhouses; and the jury who cast a theatrical critic in damages are pretty sure to have the public on their side. The conscientious criticism of one's contemporaries must always be a sufficiently thankless task, and can rarely be an agreeable one. But the critic of the theatre has the hardest lot of all; and that editor of *The Times* was, we suspect, right who warned his critic that it was not worth their while to take the theatre too seriously. Assuredly the critic was wise in his generation who accepted the warning.

If baiting authors has been always a recognized pastime, the critics in their turn have not gone free.

Such shameless bards we have; and yet 'tis true,  
There are as mad abandoned critics too.

From Horace to Matthew Arnold, all have had a fling at them, and they can hardly be said to have had the best of the game. The world has never been sorry to see a critic caught on the hip; partly

perhaps because he is, as we have said, a self-appointed censor. Yet there was a time when his censorship was, if not always accepted, at least thought deserving consideration. The judgment of certain men on every new work of art was eagerly expected by the public, and in even more eager if less acquiescent spirit by the artist. From many causes, some of which it were not easy, and others it were superfluous, to define, criticism has lost this general respect. Whether the critic had ever really the power with which he was often complimented, and perhaps sometimes believed himself to possess, must be doubtful. It is certain that he has it not now. At his best he is but the mouthpiece of the educated few; for the most part, as Goethe said, he but instils a sort of half-culture into the masses, teaching them to look alike for faults and for beauties which they cannot appreciate, and to ignore those which they can. But malice or ignorance never really injured a good work, nor did flattery ever succeed in permanently establishing a bad one. Criticism as a rule has done no more than give utterance to the taste of the time. In the days of our fathers fewer people thought it necessary to have a taste, there were fewer varieties of taste, and as a consequence there were fewer critics. Within the last generation the number of labourers in the great field of art has wonderfully increased and is increasing every day: the number of people interested in their productions, or who wish to be thought interested, has increased and is increasing in almost the same proportion; it is inevitable that the number of critics should also have increased. A critic is now as necessary an appanage of a newspaper as the printer or the editor, and the number of newspapers is beyond all power of guessing. In such conditions it is obvious that there must be a vast quantity of careless criticism, and not a little that must be ignorant, though with the best intention to be neither. Dishonest or spite-

ful criticism has of course always existed in more or less degree, but the opportunities for its exercise must at least be more abundant now than they have ever been before. It is idle to say that such criticism does not exist, or to throw the charge upon wounded vanity or disappointed hopes. It is natural that a young artist should attribute censure to anything rather than his own faults, and in the general cry against the critics this must always be taken into the account. But neither great age nor great experience is needed to show that in the current criticism of our press there is much at work foreign to what should be its true purpose. We are far from saying that it is always of an evil kind. The sweet influences of friendship prevail doubtless as often as the baser instincts of our frail nature, let us think that they prevail more often; but the one can be as inimical to the truth as the other. Indeed of the two, the foolish face of praise is probably more baleful than the "stare tremendous of the threatening eye". For the public, being persuaded that critics are as a rule ill-natured, pay little heed to any real or supposed confirmation of their belief; whereas the nauseous flatteries in which criticism occasionally indulges attract notice by their very unexpectedness, and the public is easily cajoled into taking the unexpected seriously. These things are of course no great calamity; they may be trusted to right themselves in time, for, as we have said, no reputation, for good or ill, has ever lasted, or will last, on such foundations. Still they exist, and 'tis pity that they should; and if criticism has to set its house in order, no corner should be left unswept. Many of the critics of our æsthetic journals are themselves producers. Is it humanly possible that they should view their fellow-workers with absolutely clear impartial eyes? Must they not, how honestly soever they may strive against the natural man in them, be somewhat in the position of the polite tradesman, thankful for past



favours and solicitous for their continuance? We have often thought it were a good thing that no editor should allow in his columns the review of a work done by one of his own contributors. To be sure this would seriously check the flow of criticism; but that were in itself perhaps no very bad thing.

There is no doubt something ludicrous in the thought of a British juryman being required to decide æsthetic questions; but in fact he is very rarely if ever required to do so. In one of the cases we have alluded to, for instance, an actor sued a critic for finding fault with his performance of the part of Romeo, and won his suit. It is probable that the jury had no very exact idea of Romeo's character, but they learned that the dissatisfied critic had a personal grudge against the actor, and they very properly gave the latter the benefit of the doubt. It is at least possible that the plaintiff did not make a first rate Romeo; it is a part very easily played badly. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the defendant said anything contrary to what he believed to be the truth, though the expression he gave to his belief seems to have been thought unnecessarily emphatic. But the moral of the case lies in the fact that he was considered by the jury to have been in a condition unfavourable to impartial judgment: he conceived himself to have been discourteously used by the actor whose performance he was judging, and the least intellectual rate-payer who ever got into a jury-box is as competent to see that criticism should not be exercised under these conditions as the best trained and most finely gifted nature. And with this decision at any rate no right-minded person, be he twenty times a critic, will be disposed to quarrel.

It is indeed possible that in these particular cases the critics have been playing the part of scapegoats, and that the blows apparently struck against their unpopular profession

were in reality aimed at the growing license of our newspaper press. There is undoubtedly a strong suspicion afoot in all classes of society that the freedom of the press is rapidly developing into something very like a tyranny. It is not only among the notoriously disreputable journals that this may be seen; even our well-ordered and well-written journals, the majority, let us be thankful to say, sometimes permit themselves a freedom of comment, to say nothing of a freedom of speech, which certainly appears to some people to exceed that fair discussion advocated by Lord Ellenborough. Newspapers are the voice of the time, and the time is undoubtedly to blame. The memory of no living man can probably recall any such scandal as our Parliament has lately exhibited in its comments on a case still before the judges, the most flagrant offender being moreover an individual whose knowledge of the law should at least have been sufficient to keep him from so wanton a breach of its first principles. Nor is it only in matters of such high importance that the offence is seen. It may be seen in a hundred different ways, not only in our desire to know all about our neighbours, but in our neighbour's desire to tell us all about himself. The newspaper appears now to be regarded not only as a court of appeal but also as the touchstone of honour. Nothing in the new order is perhaps more disturbing to the few and faded survivals from the old than the eagerness with which a correspondence which would once have been considered private is now forwarded to the papers, no matter how unimportant the subject or the correspondents,—for it is not only the King of Syria whose morning meditations must now be known of all men before sundown. Indeed it appears to be the last, and the unfailing, resource of those unfortunate individuals who have not yet attained the distinction of publicity—not even by imprisonment for conscience' sake—and are unable in any other way to gratify their consuming thirst for noto-

riety, to enter into a correspondence for the sole purpose of printing it in the newspapers. Whether the partner of their fulfilled renown be consenting or not, matters nothing ; he has put his hand to the pen, and may not look back if he will. We were mightily indignant, and justly indignant, at the trick played last year by an unscrupulous American upon our Minister at Washington ; but we could find as righteous subjects for our indignation many times without looking across the Atlantic.

Should this feeling, then, be at the bottom of this onslaught on the unfortunate critic, it may be suffered with some complacency. He might indeed congratulate himself, if he were both patriotic and modest, on having for once in his life been of use to his

generation. And if it be merely another proof that in an age of freedom no man has a right to say what he pleases, and any man has a right to knock him down, or, as perhaps we should rather say, pull him up, for saying it, even then no great harm will have been done. It is true that if this ruling be pushed to its logical conclusion the critic's occupation, so far as his contemporaries are concerned, will be for ever gone, unless he be content, unlike a departed poet, to praise the rose that all are praising ; yet even that result may be trusted not to imperil the safety of the nation nor to eclipse its gaiety. If, as we have heard it boasted, Christianity has been abolished by a novelist, we can surely endure that criticism should be abolished by a judge.

## THE "POOR WHITES" OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.

THE Blue Ridge Mountains, running nearly parallel with the Atlantic coast and at an average distance from it of about one hundred and fifty miles, divide the State of Virginia into two somewhat distinct portions. The larger and eastern one may be called the Virginia of history and tradition, of large planters, negroes, tobacco, everything in short that the popular idea connects with the name of the Old Dominion. The smaller and western division bears the impress of a much later settlement. A strong stream of Ulster and German blood flows in the veins of a thrifter but less generous population. Negroes are scarcer, cattle are more numerous: tobacco and maize give precedence to abundant crops of grass and wheat, while a colder climate and a more generally mountainous surface still further accentuate the differences of race and age. When Virginia stood alone as England's greatest colony, and presented to the emigrant of the seventeenth or eighteenth century a counterpart to the mother country in manners and customs such as could not be found elsewhere, political and social life was bounded almost as completely by the Blue Ridge upon the west as it was upon the east by the ocean. It was the first outwork of the Alleghanies, and civilization, after creeping cautiously to its base, halted for half a century before it gathered strength and courage to cross the mighty wall into the fertile lands beyond it. The Blue Ridge indeed may claim no small place in history, since for two at least if not three generations it was practically the western boundary of the civilized world. Upon the one side of it was the broad-acred Virginian squire as vestryman, magis-

trate, burgess, fox-hunter, champion of Church and King and all the rest of it, ruling benignly over a community of English and African dependants. Upon the other the hated Indian roamed through a trackless wilderness, dashing from time to time through the mountain passes in fierce raids on the frontiersmen whose shanties formed, as it were, an unpaid line of defence for the aristocracy of the eastern settlements.

Time has long robbed the Blue Ridge of all significance but the surpassing beauty of its form and colouring. Hundreds of miles beyond the blue peaks that were once the Ultima Thule of Anglo-Saxons have arisen some of the most populous centres upon earth; and the scream of the iron horse dragging its heavy freights eastward wakes strange echoes in wild upland glens whose solitudes have otherwise defied the march of civilization. The traveller of to-day on his way south by one at least of the great trunk-lines from Washington will for many hours see the Blue Ridge filling the horizon upon his right hand. He will pass innumerable streams that either bear the names or swell the waters of those eastern rivers that the civil war made famous. Rumbling Creek is one of these, and I mention it particularly for two reasons. The first is that, after crossing the river on a tressel-bridge, the train stops at the station of Tucker's Mills, from which I think the passing traveller gets the best distant view of the mountains to be had from the railway. The second, because it is upon the head-waters of this tortuous and noisy stream that I purpose to introduce the reader to that strange specimen of humanity—the Southern Mountaineer.

So far, however, as the station at Tucker's Mills and its surroundings are concerned, the mountaineer population might be in another planet. The river, it is true, races under the railway-bridge with something of the life that marks its earlier career as a foaming trout-stream in some dark ravine of the great Appalachian rampart that towers so wonderfully blue into the distant sky. But the landscape all around is of a lowland character; fat cornfields and green meadows and big farm-houses, half-hidden in apple-orchards and groves of oak and tobacco-fields just planted, and through all the roseate blush of the red soil from lane and fallow glowing against the rich greenery of crop or woodland. Perfect in outline, and of that marvellous hue which caused the simple name it still bears to burst naturally from the lips of the adventurers of two centuries and a half ago, the Blue Ridge rolls wave after wave along the western sky. It is full twenty miles away, though you would not think the distance to be half so great. The road leading thither is of the true old Virginian type, full in winter of mudholes that have absorbed, and absorbed apparently in vain, waggon-loads of fence-rails and tons of rock: in summer rough and bony, with ruts worn into chasms and slabs of freestone cropping up above the dusty clay. On the subject of roads even the patriotic eloquence of good Virginians remains dumb; though old man Pippin, who lives on the hill-top yonder and is a firm believer in the superiority of the district watered by Rumbling Creek to every other part of the known world, has been heard to maintain the advantages of even a really bad road: "I tell you, sir, them ar' cademized roads is mighty hard on a horse; when thar ain't no mudholes and no rocks a man don't know when to pull up, and is mighty apt to go bust'n his horse along till he drap under him."

There is no fear of any one pursuing such a reckless course between Tucker's

mills and the mountains. The road bristles with impediments over which an uneducated steed would probably "drap", though not from exhaustion, if he consented to face them at all. But upon a small active horse to the manner born, the traveller would be indeed hard to please who could not forget the ruggedness of the road in the beauty of the scenes through which it passes. If the pace be somewhat slow, and particularly should the season of the year be May or early June, who would wish to hurry through such an Arcady? The wheat on the hill-sides is just heading; the early corn in the low grounds is knee-high, and the negro labourers shout their queer spasmodic melodies as they drive their one-horsed ploughs along the rows. At one turn the road enters some forest of primeval oaks and chestnuts through whose tops the sunbeams shyly flicker on the fresh green leaves of shrubs and saplings. At another it will be separated from the ceaseless babble of the river by narrow clover-fields ripe for the scythe, or long stretches of clean red soil in which the young tobacco-plants are making their first struggle for existence. The log-cabin of the negro is ubiquitous, on the slopes of the hills, by the roadside, in the depths of the forest. Unpretentious homesteads, suited to the needs of the times, look peacefully down from wood-crowned hills, while here and there some spacious mansion, with its brick walls and pillared porticoes, stands among aged and branching oaks as a memorial of the days of slavery. Again and again the road plunges into the gradually narrowing river and, as your horse pauses in midstream to slake that unquenchable thirst which the Virginian nag so uniformly affects, rare vistas of wood and water opening to the sight cause you to encourage the bad habits of the cunning quadruped. All the familiar trees that love the banks of running streams are here. The sycamore and the beech, the ash, the alder and the willow, spread their branches above the stream, while un-

derneath their shade the kingfisher and the common sandpiper scud from rock to rock till they vanish over the white sunlit rapids beyond. Shoals of minnows race in the shallows under your horse's feet, and a big chub plunges in the still pool above. The deep boom of the bull-frog sounding from some rushy backwater beats time to the ceaseless chorus of the woodland crickets, and as the day wanes the tinkling of cow-bells in the lanes and woods answers to the musical summons of their owners from the hills above.

And in the meantime the massive outline of the mountains looms nearer and larger. The blue veil of distance is lifted and the mighty wall above us becomes one vast screen of rustling leaves. Houses of even a humble kind grow scarce. The stream gets steeper in its fall, and thunders in an angry fashion against the rugged cliffs and moss-grown rocks that hem in its waters. An old mill, its timbers black with time and weather, totters over an idle wheel. It is the last outpost of southern civilization. The sights and sounds of every-day Virginian life are left behind—the red fallows and the green maize-fields—the shout of the negro ploughman and the summer pipe of the quail. The mountains begin to close around, and the air is full of the noise of falling waters, the scent of cedars and hemlocks, and the steady moan of mountain winds sweeping softly over many miles of leaves. A change of scene more complete within the same short space it would be hard to find. The red clay road winding so lately through cheery rural scenes becomes a stony track painfully toiling upwards between the huge trunks of a dark and sombre forest to the now hidden sky-line three thousand feet above us.

Here is the domain of the mountaineer. Not the romantic, ornamental, somewhat glorified peasant that the word is apt to suggest, but merely one branch of that despised and outcast race of white men that Southern

slavery begot. The Southern "Poor White", of which the mountaineer is certainly the most interesting type, is not himself the outcast of a recent or a single generation. He is the descendant of those who in former days either sunk below the level, or as emigrants began life outside the pale, of those connected directly or indirectly with the domestic institution and the landed interest. Such men in the Free States in the natural order of things would have carved a road to competence if not to fortune. In the Slave States an emigrant without means or education may have done so, but the chances were that the odds were too much for him, and that his children were driven, not by violence or deliberate combinations, but by the force of circumstances, into the rough and waste places of the land. There they have multiplied and stagnated, illiterate, squalid, poor, unambitious, despised by whites and by negroes alike, clinging together, intermarrying and degenerating physically and morally. Not at war exactly with the world, but going through life with a kind of latent animosity towards it as if it had used them ill, and a vague idea that their lot is hard and their chance a poor one. And so it is. Not that a pair of stout arms and a stout heart will not still in America bring a labouring man at least competence; but though the stout arms are there, the energy and the brains to direct them have practically deserted this strange group of the Anglo-Saxon family.

When an American declares that in his country there is no poverty or want outside the city, he is talking nonsense, though nonsense of an honest kind free from all intention to mislead. Not one American in a thousand outside the South Atlantic States knows much more of the Southern Poor White than he knows of the Esquimaux. How can he? Of the mountaineer, the Southern people themselves know scarcely anything, unless it be those few who live right in the

very shadow of the great ranges. Even among the class in question, material prosperity and civilization varies considerably in different states and regions of country. But there is neither space nor need to examine such details. The mountaineer of Blue Ridge, who has been entirely surrounded by a lowland civilization for generations, is on that very account a more curious spectacle than the better fed hunter, for instance, of the vast highlands of West Virginia or the "Cracker" of the boundless back-country that lies behind the sugar and rice plantations and the orange groves of the far South.

It is a popular notion that the Poor or Mean Whites of the South are descended from the indentured servants that were shipped to the Southern colonies from England in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. That there can be anything like uniformity in their origin is impossible. In the ups and downs of colonial and frontier life, men of all sorts must have been jolted off the track, and with the growth of slavery and the comparative contempt for manual labour that always existed in the South sunk out of the race and retired into the forests to live as illiterate hunters or idlers. The position their descendants occupy is at least unique. They are worse off in every respect, save fuel, than the French or Belgian peasant, while the latter in his turn has a harder struggle for existence than the average British labourer. The mountaineer of Blue Ridge cultivates his own land, or land so rough that its owners do not care to interfere with him. He touches his hat to no one. But even in a democratic country where hand-shaking is a mania and has no social significance, the plainest kind of country farmer does not much care about extending the hand of citizenship to the pariah from the mountains or the pine-barrens. The latter may starve when his meagre corn-crop and his scanty supply of bacon runs out in the early spring, for all the outside world

is concerned or is aware of; and if he does not actually die of starvation, he very often comes quite as near it as the perennial paupers of the Connemara bogs.

To look up at the Blue Ridge from its base you would hardly suppose that a vestige of life lurked beneath that vast green canopy of leaves. A familiar eye might detect here and there the corner of a clearing peeping above the shoulders of the hills, and in early spring clouds of smoke rising from some burning new ground proclaim to the dwellers in the world below that human life of some sort exists up in those wild woods. This indeed is about all the majority of the community ever see of the mountain man. There are exceptions, however, and Pete is an exception. Pete is a veritable chieftain among mountaineers, and at the same time is known in the low country for many miles round. His cabin stands upon the very frontiers of his dominion. At the very foot of the "big mountain" (as distinguished from the spurs and foothills), right in the angle where the north and south forks of Rumbling Creek tumble their respective waters together in a churning and boiling pool, stands the mansion of this illustrious man. Here, too, with the dividing stream the rough road divides also, and by the side of these stony tracks and on the banks of these rocky streams, reaching far away up to the highest gaps between the mountain peaks, are scattered at long intervals the isolated hovels of Pete's subjects. Pete's house, as I have said, stands as befits his autocratic position at the forks of road and stream, and no one can get up the mountain on business or pleasure bent without undergoing the scrutiny of his ever-watchful eye. The house is comparatively palatial, and the shoulders of the hills have receded sufficiently at this meeting of the waters to leave nearly two acres of flat ground around it, giving an air of ease, solidity and distinction to Pete's ancestral hall that the ordinary mountain cabin de-



cidedly lacks. Pete has sown the flat in clover, a wonderful concession to lowland ideas. He has even planted a dozen or two of young apple-trees, which mark him as a man far in advance of his race. The logs of his house, too, are squared and not merely round poles unbarked, like the architecture higher up the creek. The chimney is also a departure from other chimneys on Rumbling Creek, for it is of rocks, not of tobacco-sticks filled in with mud.

One other fact places Pete on a pinnacle in his community—he can write! This is the last letter he wrote to me :

DR. SUR,

Thars trowte in the Crick by a heap  
mo' nor lars yer. Cum orn rite soon.  
Thars tu walers in the hole at the fork.

Yrs respecly,

PETE ROBISON.

From this it may be gathered that my acquaintance with Pete and the mountain community on Rumbling Creek, an acquaintance renewed annually for many years, was due to a predilection for the gentle art. No strangers indeed but anglers (and they were scarce enough), unless it were the sheriff or an occasional cattle-dealer crossing the range by this rough route, ever penetrate beyond the forks of the creek where Pete's cabin stands. And few of these pass his door without alighting. Whether the subject in hand is trout or cattle, horse-thieves or whisky-stills, Pete's countenance and advice is almost indispensable. For our friend is not only an exceedingly smart man in his way, but an original and a character of the most pronounced description. What is more he is known as a "sponsable mount'n man", a unique departure from ordinary rules and a much greater exception even than a responsible Ethiopian. Pete has never been suspected of stealing a steer or setting fire to a barn. When he has taken a contract from some lowland farmer for roofing-shingles, or from the miller for barrel-staves, he has been frequently

known to carry out his agreement within the appointed time. People have even been known to pay him money on account before the completion of contracts, which with an ordinary mountaineer would be a most fatuous proceeding. Old Squire Tucker, the big man of the country below the mountains and once Member of Congress, used in former days moreover to ask Pete down to play the banjo and tell "bar stories" to the fine folks from Washington staying in his house. For there was no one on the mountain, nor a negro below it, could "pick a banjer" like Pete. Many a night after assisting at one of those mountain suppers that nothing but lusty youth still further hardened by long days on the rocky streams or in the saddle could have survived, have I sat and smoked while Pete twanged at his banjo and crooned out his quaint medley of negro airs and Baptist hymns. Strange performances they used to be, with for audience a group of wild mountain men, drawn together by the rare news of a stranger's arrival, standing in the flickering fire-light, and beating time with their often shoeless feet upon the rough boarded floor; and outside the chorus of the frogs and crickets, the intermittent cry of the screech-owl and the cat-bird, the roar and the gleam of the white water, and the flashing of the fire-flies against the black gloom of the night and the forest.

The popular notion in Virginia of the mountaineer, a notion founded more or less upon fact, is that of an attenuated, neutral-tinted expressionless spectre. It is a favourite local pleasantry that the Southern Highlander has, through isolation, ignorance and apathy, so lost the human form divine, as to be indistinguishable at any distance in the woods from a cedar-stump or a fence-rail stuck upon end. Pete at any rate represented a very different variety. He was short and thick, with huge long arms. Everything that was to be seen of him, except his eyes, was covered with

black shaggy hair. If a human being could be like a bear, Pete was that man; while, curiously enough, if all the real bears on the mountain could have been polled upon the subject, they would most certainly have agreed that Pete was their wildest and deadliest foe. Pete was well-to-do. He had a young horse of his own, whereas most of the folks higher up the creek had to be content with a share in an old one. His house outside, as I have said, was a superior one. Inside you would have said it was absolutely luxurious, if you had begun to pay calls at the top of the mountain instead of coming up from the country below. The long Kentucky rifle that had slain many a bear, and underneath it the banjo were ranged above the chimney-piece in the living-room. In this apartment, too, was the family bedstead, resplendent with frilled pillow-cases and a patchwork quilt. There was an oak dresser which contrasted oddly with the smoke-blackened logs of the walls, and which Pete used to declare his great-grandfather had brought from "out thar"—a phrase expressing the mountaineer's very hazy notion of the mother country. Pods of red pepper and twists of home-grown tobacco hung from the rafters, while the decorative tastes of the family were displayed in a pedlar's coloured print of Washington on the verge apparently of an apoplectic fit, and a somewhat realistic representation of Lazarus emerging from the tomb. Pete also had a guest-chamber, where weary anglers and an occasional benighted traveller might dispose their tired limbs on straw mattresses of adamant texture, and resign themselves to tortures from unseen enemies over which memory entreats us to draw the veil.

For land, there were the two acres of clover and struggling apple-trees, and a clearing of twenty acres on the slope of the mountain above. In the latter Pete had grown crop after crop in succession, and declared that the shrinking yield was the result of the

wickedness of the times generally. Mrs. Pete, however, insisted it was a sign of the approaching end of the world and that carnival of flame and torture the anticipation of which so fascinates the mind of the illiterate Calvinist. Pete moreover had a cow and a heifer, and several thousand roofing-shingles and barrel-staves cut in the woods, and some hogs running wild on the mountain, that at this season of the year could almost have wormed themselves underneath his front door.

Pete had seen a lot of life for a mountaineer, for he had been through the war. He was the only man probably on the mountain that felt the least enthusiasm for the Southern cause, and had been more than once detailed with a sergeant's guard to hunt up deserters with which the gorges of the Blue Ridge swarmed. Pete knew every cave in the mountains and every trail. He still recounts with great gusto the exciting "stalks" his truant neighbours used to give him in those stormy days. Many a rifle-shot they exchanged is joked over between them as they huddle over the winter fire, as little influenced for good or evil by that great strife as if they were living in the Sandwich Islands.

Mrs. Pete is a typical mountain woman, gaunt of figure, and with a skin like dried parchment stretched over her projecting bones. If there is little of animation in her appearance, there is less in her manner, and her life is a dreary one indeed. A mixture of superstition and "mountain methodism" seems to dominate her existence. She will sit for hours before the fire in the broken rocking-chair, crooning out disconnected lamentations, after some such wise as this—"The Lord is good! The Lord is mighty good! We're too sinful, too bad to live! Even this yer mountain's too good for sich as us!" Poor woman, very little attraction there has been for her to wander off along the broad and easy road. Her greatest

thorn is the wickedness of Pete, who has never even "professed". That Pete is by far the most honest and virtuous man in the mountain will, from her peculiar religious standpoint, amount to nothing in the absence of the superstitious hysteria that she regards as salvation.

Following the winding of the narrow valley, sometimes clinging to the wooded hillside, sometimes descending to the level of the stream, toils upwards the rugged, stony track that is the highway of the mountaineer. Little clusters of cabins break at long intervals the rich and varied foliage of the forest. Rude houses enough for the second or third or even the fifth and sixth generation of Anglo-Saxons in the land of phenomenal progress. The roofs are of riven white oak-boards, curled and twisted by the action of the sun and weather; the walls are of rough, unbarked logs, enclosing a single room; the chimneys are of sticks and mud. Round the house there is a small garden-patch fenced in with chestnut-rails, where a few common vegetables, such as peas and onions, testify to the richness of the loose black mountain soil. To each house there is probably a cow wandering in the woods, making in summer a tolerable living on the bushes and weeds, but passing every winter through a critical period of want and weakness, when the slender supply of corn-fodder begins to fail. Lean hogs stretch themselves in the sun among the warm rocks, lean as greyhounds, while their only chance of making bacon lies in the still unformed fruit of the oaks and chestnuts that spread their branches above them. The women around the settlement will be more conspicuous at this time of day than the men. Nowhere else in the world have the Anglo-Saxon race produced such unattractive and ungraceful females. The peasant girl of Europe may not be all that poetic fancy sometimes paints her, but she at least has health and comeliness, colour and a cheerful mien. The peasant of the

Southern mountains has health after a fashion, or at least a wiriness and tenacity of life; but she carries no sign of it in her bony figure and drawn colourless face. As for the men in this early summer season, when the rest of rural mankind, both North, South and West, in their very various fashions, are snatching the fleeting hour, they may be in the corn-patch on the mountain above, but are just as likely to be found loafing through the woods in listless Indian fashion, rifle in hand, or wandering by the brooks with their rough rods and tackle. Though trout, squirrels, an occasional turkey, with now and then a portion of a deer or bear in their various seasons are to be obtained, no dependence can be placed on such additions to the larder of the Blue Ridge mountaineer in the annual period of semi-starvation through which he generally passes. Game at that time is scare and wild, and is not too plentiful in these narrow ranges at any period. If these cabins and clearings were in Montana or British Columbia, there would be nothing singular about them; they would be the common-place heralds of advancing civilization. The men and women might bear the outward stamp of poverty, but hope and intelligence would be written on their faces and the crudeness of their surroundings would be but a recognized and honourable phase in their career to prosperity. Here, however, it is all different; the squalor carries no hope with it, and is the outcome of the oldest civilization in the Western world.

And yet the goal of civilization and comparative prosperity through all these years has been within easy sight. There is hardly a bend in the road up the gorge of Rumbling Creek, from which if you turn in your saddle you cannot look down over the tree-tops upon the rolling plain of old Virginia, which means so little to the mountaineer. The very roofs of the plantation-houses, catching the sun ten or fifteen miles away, flash from

point to point as the eye ranges far over the rich and glowing stretch of field and forest. The white smoke of a train goes trailing northward towards Washington. Senators, congressmen, merchants, millionaires, tourists from beyond the seas, are there likely, watching with admiration the ever-changing outline of the glorious crags upon whose sides we stand. But of the race who inhabit them, their habits and customs, the senator and the foreign tourist have the same knowledge; for all that one or the other knows of the population upon Rumbling Creek they might be Digger Indians.

What life is upon the head-waters of Rumbling Creek, so with slightly varying conditions it is in the thousand other valleys of the Southern Mountains. Better land and more abundant game modify material conditions, but the four or five millions of mountaineers belong all to the same non-progressive class. They are out of touch with everything which the name of America suggests to the outside world. Books on Rumbling Creek are unknown, for there are no scholars. Pete can read, and the county paper once a week finds its way to that worthy, who transmits the news up the mountain. Nor is life absolutely without excitement. If wheat bread is at a discount and hogsmeat at certain periods wofully scarce, there are weddings once in a while, when some buck from the north fork of the Creek crosses the mountain and brings back a barefooted bride from the further side of the range. There is a sound of the banjo then, and the mountain boys "patting" and dancing on the loose undressed planks of the cabin floors. And there is Pete to perform the ceremony if the wandering Baptist preacher from Juniper Creek, ten miles to the southward, cannot be found in time. A new cabin then runs up in some hollow even still more remote than the rough highway on which the old folks live. Another five or six acres of oak, chestnut, poplar and gum

are belted and killed, and become grim and naked skeletons in the great woods. And under these trunks and unsightly limbs another half-worked corn-crop will struggle with only partial success against bushes, squirrels and crows. As for funerals, that festival so dear to the negro, I had almost said that the people in these mountains never die. In spite of hard winters, when two or three weeks together both forks of Rumbling Creek go choking and gurgling under heavy crusts of ice; when the hemlock and the cypress are loaded with frozen snow, and the unwonted silence of the mountains is only broken by the fearful echoes of some forest monarch tottering under its wintry load and crashing down the frozen slopes; when the bears descend from their wild gorges near the mountain tops and print their tracks by night upon the very orchards and paddocks of the lowland homesteads; when the rude grist-mills on Rumbling Creek are silent, and what little corn there may be left on the mountain cannot be ground; and when the winter wind howls through the gaping chinks of the cabins, and drives the mountaineer close into his one luxury, a blazing hearth in which his shivering hide-bound horse and lean cow in the log-shed outside unfortunately cannot share,—in spite of these and many other annually recurring horrors, in spite of his lantern jaws, his parchment skin, his irregularly filled stomach, the mountaineer of Blue Ridge may be almost said to defy death. There are men of seventy in these mountains, wandering in summer time along the streams, who talk as naturally as possible about their "pa" at home; and there sure enough at the cabin in the woods above you will find the veteran himself, seated probably on a straw chair on the shady side of the house, puffing at a long pipe and shaking his head at the very mention of time, as if it had long past his reckoning powers.

The population in Rumbling Creek

live mostly in small settlements,—a cluster of half-a-dozen cabins more or less together and between them long intervals of forest. These settlements in great measure represent different families, or at least clans of the same name. Family feuds deep and bitter between clan and clan have not seldom agitated the mountains from top to bottom. The knife and the bullet have played their part many times within the memory of even the middle-aged, and the county sheriff could tell many a tale of pursuit, generally fruitless, over these pathless hills. On such occasions indeed it is upon Pete that the majesty of the law leans. The most determined officer, in such a wilderness, would have a poor chance unaided by local experience of hunting down a mountaineer. Pete feels his importance to the full on such occasions. It is pretty well known that it is he who decides beforehand in his own mind on the veniality of the "cuttin'" or "shootin'", and arranges for escape or capture as seems good to his judicial mind. Pete belongs to no sept, so may be supposed to be free from all personal bias. From the very rare occasions on which an offender has been actually brought to justice we may conclude that Pete is not rigid in his views upon the use of deadly weapons in dispute. Few Southerners indeed of any kind are decided upon that point, and certainly no mountaineers.

The nomenclature on Rumbling Creek is amazing. The surnames are of course common English or Irish ones, but the Christian or "given" names in which the local imagination has had full play surpass in extravagance those even of the plantation negroes. Pete's immediate neighbours consist of a father of eighty and three middle-aged sons. The former's name is Micajah, the latter are known commonly as Atch, Phil and Pole. Such familiar abbreviations might pass almost unnoticed, if you did not chance to find out that they were short for Achilles, Philander and Napoleon.

Co-operation of any kind has always been a difficulty on the mountain. A little way above Pete's house, by the side of the stream the uncompleted log body of a house stands and has stood for years. Pete at some former period, urged forward probably by his devout helpmate, decided that it was a disgrace to the mountain that its people had no regular church. Logs were cut and hauled, so many a-piece, by the various families. When it came to "raising" the house however, and a general gathering of the clans was necessary, every attempt resulted after a log or two had been put up, in what Pete denominates as a "fuss",—and a "fuss" in the South means a free fight. So the church, according to Pete's account—for it was a long time ago and the logs have got quite black and mossy now—had to be abandoned altogether, and the parson continues his monthly exhortations in Pete's living-room.

The trout of Rumbling Creek have always been a leading item in the general economy of the mountain. I do not allude to them merely as an article of food. There are no sweeter trout in the world than these, but the native as a rule has been satiated with them, and has to be exceedingly hungry before he has any relish for what his betters consider a luxury. Of fishing, however, he never tires, and if he ventures out of the mountain to the nearest village store, it is generally to exchange trout for whisky or ammunition. The sport itself seems to exercise a fascination over these rude beings, and there is considerable rivalry of skill among them. Until quite recently the art of fly-fishing was unknown, and even now it is only a very adventurous sportsman among the mountaineers who attains to that pinnacle of science. Worm-fishing, however, in clear water is, as all anglers know, something of an art in itself, and in this art the rude fishermen of Rumbling Creek excelled. Pete claimed always to be the best fisherman of the mountain.



Deep and almost bitter was the rivalry for pre-eminence between him and old man 'Lisha, who lived near the top of the pass. Through many a long spring day, when April showers have been driving the wild cherry-blossoms in clouds on to the river-banks, have these two champions, when they ought to have been ploughing their corn-land, wrestled for the biggest "string" of fish.

Trout in these latitudes cannot live away from the forest shade and the cool waters of the great mountain ranges. Before the war, with the exception of the mountaineers and an occasional farmer in the country adjoining, scarcely a trout-fisherman could have been found in Virginia. The mountaineers themselves appreciated the superiority of trout-fishing to the kind of angling for coarse fish in vogue in the lowlands, and prided themselves vastly on the accomplishment. It was a dreadful day indeed when the first fly was thrown on Rumbling Creek. Some gentlemen from a neighbouring city had come up to Pete's and camped in his lot. The mountaineers mustered round the camp-fire in force as usual. When Pete and uncle 'Lisha saw the "feathered hooks" of the city men, they "laffed", in those worthies' own lingo, "fit to bust theirselves!" Pete often talks of that never-to-be-forgotten day years ago, how the news went up the mountain "that thar war jinted poles cost hundreds of dollars and such fallals and fixins and such a rig as never had bin seen'd"! Pete declares that the mountaineers ran like sheep the next day when they saw old Jedge B. "wallerin' in the water, fixed up in gum pants, with a big dip net and swishin' his pole all over the crik like a crazy man". Old man 'Lisha said it "cum near makin' him mad, city fellahs comin' up thar to tell him how to cotch trout, who'd bin raised right thar on the Crik nigh a

hunderd yer ago he reckoned". The trout of Rumbling Creek, however, though highly educated to the hickory sapling and worm-hook, had never seen a fly, and they fell by hundreds before the onslaught of even these very elementary performers. The mountain was paralyzed; the faith of ages was upset; the natives felt that they had been made to look ridiculous and were inclined to attribute supernatural charms to the "feathered hooks". Pete, however, was not to be daunted. He took observation when he recovered the first shock, and got some flies from the Judge's book. Pete was a real sportsman, and in the midst of his chagrin could recognize the superiority of the new art to his own. I have fished with him many and many a day; he is now tolerably skilful with the fly, and has long been accustomed to declare that he would sooner catch one that way than two with bait. He is still apt, however, to strike his fish in the fearless old fashion, as he used to strike when he as often as not landed it in the top of a hemlock tree—on such occasions he justly says, "suthin's got to go," and it is needless to remark that it is generally the fly. Old 'Lisha took up fly-fishing, too, for a bit, but soon went back to the familiar worm. And I think he felt sorry he had been spared to see such a day upon the Creek as the one described. As for Pete no earthly cares, no failure of crops, no shrinkage in the meal-barrel, can keep him away from the river bank. The water has been of late years more fished both with worm and fly than of old. Pete shakes his head over the degeneracy of the times, but for all that there is hardly a spring or summer evening that you will not even now see him by the "hole at the forx" industriously flogging for those "walers" about whose conjectured dimensions he spins such tremendous fireside yarns.

A. G. BRADLEY.



## SIR WALTER SCOTT.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT ETON.<sup>1</sup>

GREAT men, so Carlyle tells us, taken up in any way are profitable company : we cannot look, he says, however imperfectly, upon a great man without gaining something by him. Very imperfect, I fear, must be the glimpses I shall be able to show you of the great man on whom it is my privilege to address you to-night ; but something at least will have been gained if they avail to send you to the biography written of Sir Walter Scott by his son-in-law Lockhart ; a true and noble book, one of the best, perhaps the best of its kind in our language. There you will find the man himself, in his habit as he lived. No great figure in literature has ever been so clearly revealed as Scott's ; and certainly none gains so much by the revelation.

Lockhart tells us that the most characteristic lines Scott ever wrote, those which give the truest index to the man, are the lines prefixed as a motto to one of the chapters of "Old Mortality."

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife !

To all the sensual world proclaim,

One crowded hour of glorious life

Is worth an age without a name.

By nature Scott was really a man of action rather than a man of letters, and he himself would always maintain that to act things was greater than to write about them. The story of his life, when well considered, shows this : his writings show it. You can trace it in his novels ; in his poetry the least critical reader cannot miss it. For what is it that we remember best in his poetry, that the idea of it brings most vividly before us ? Not his descriptions of scenery or of the softer

moods and feelings of human nature, delightful as they always are. To find the genuine Scott we must not look for him in such passages as the description of Melrose Abbey by moonlight, or of Edinburgh,—his "own romantic town",—as Marmion saw it from the top of Blackford Hill, or of Ellen Douglas in the fresh bloom of her young life, or of the old minstrel in his decay, tuning the harp "a king had loved to hear". These, and many more like them which you will readily recall for yourselves, are charming passages, full of genuine feeling both for nature and humanity, expressed in poetry as true as it is simple ; but they do not really give us Scott at his best—Scott, as one of his critics said, "when his blood is up and the first words come like a vanguard impatient for battle." To find that we must turn to his scenes of action and tumult ; to the midnight ride of William of Deloraine or to the march of the English powers against Branksome ; to the chase that cost Fitzjames his gallant grey, or to the fight between Clan Alpine and the Saxons ; to the scene where Marmion dares

To beard the lion in his den,

The Douglas in his hall

and above all to the magnificent battle of Flodden, which for the very form and pressure of war it would be hard to beat in any language ancient or modern.

Horace, you remember, has warned the poet who would move his hearers that he must first show them that he is moved himself. Scott is so good in his battle-scenes because he loved to write about knightly deeds. The thought of a heroic action, whether done by Scotsman or Englishman, whether crowned with victory or de-

<sup>1</sup> It will be obvious, I hope, that this lecture was specially composed for the audience before whom it was delivered.

feat, stirred his blood, to use Sir Philip Sidney's famous phrase, as with the sound of a trumpet. The old fighting spirit of his ancestors was always strong within him, and just at this time it had been strongly roused. At the beginning of this century the power of Napoleon was at its height. Rumours of invasion were flying all round our coasts: it was the time of Henry the Fifth over again—"Now all the youth of England is on fire". You remember that fine scene in "The Antiquary" where the Scottish trainbands muster to a false alarm. A scene like this actually came under Scott's eye, and in the spirit which prompted it no one shared more keenly than he. The young men of Edinburgh had formed themselves into a regiment of Light Horse, and the life and soul of them all was Quartermaster Scott. "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" and "Marmion" were both written under this influence; much of the latter was actually composed in the saddle. No wonder, then, that the note of war, "the thunder of the captains and the shouting," sounds so clear and true through these poems. And even when Scott, like his own minstrel, had grown "infirm and old", the flame flashed out as vigorously as ever when occasion stirred it. When some French general, conceiving himself to have been aggrieved by a passage in the "Life of Napoleon", began to mutter threats of satisfaction, the old war-horse, then in his fifty-seventh year, started at once to the sound of the trumpet. He wrote to a friend to engage his services should the affair come to fighting. "If the quarrel be thrust upon me", he said, "why, I will not balk him, Jackie. He shall not dishonour the country through my sides, I can assure him". And one of the last pieces of verse he ever wrote, when ill-health and misfortune were pressing hard upon him, was the immortal ballad of "Bonnie Dundee".

I have said that Scott drew this fighting spirit from his ancestors. His parents were of gentle blood, but plain

folk enough: his father a lawyer, his mother the daughter of an Edinburgh physician. But behind these two stretched a long line of old Border lairds, branches of the great house of Buccleuch, famous fighters and freebooters, most skilful in illustrating what Wordsworth has called,

The good old rule, the simple plan,  
That they should take who have the power,  
And they should keep who can.

And his earliest education was such as became a chip of this old block. His first consciousness of existence, he tells us, began in an old farm-house called Sandyknowe, on the borders of Berwickshire, nestling beneath the crags on which rise the ruined towers of Smailholm, the scene of his fine ballad of "The Eve of Saint John." He had been sent there from Edinburgh when little more than a baby, after a fever which had crippled one of his legs. He soon recovered its use, and, though he went more or less lame through life, in his prime no man on the Border side was a bolder rider or more untiring walker than Walter Scott.

Meet nurse indeed for a poetic child is that country, as some of you I dare say know. From that old legendary tower you look over a land where, as he himself has said, every valley has its battle and every stream its song. There are the ruined abbeys of Dryburgh and Melrose, circled by the silver-winding Tweed. Above Melrose rise the purple peaks of Eildon, cloven into that shape, so it was held in the dark ages, by the wand of the great wizard Michael Scott, and destined in a brighter age to be the favourite haunt of a far mightier magician of the same strain. Among those peaks is the fabled glen where Thomas the Rhymer met the Queen of Fairyland, and not far off is the roofless tower which was the earthly habitation of that famous seer. There is the field of Ancrum where Angus and the bold Buccleuch took their memorable vengeance on the English for the insult done to the graves of the Douglasses. There are

the smiling valley of the Leader and the bleak uplands of Lammermoor. There rise the ranges which mark the waters of the Ettrick and the Yarrow, streams not less famous in song than the Simois and the Tiber; while westward and southward stretch the long blue line of the Cheviots. Nature could have spread no fitter page before the opening eyes of the last and greatest of the Border Minstrels. Nor were the right interpreters wanting. About the farm were many in whose youth the memory of the wild riding days of the Border was still fresh; and many a story and song did they tell him of the old heroes who had forayed and fought over that fair country. If a lad so nursed into life was to be a poet at all, he could not well have been other than the poet this one was.

Of course his education was not all of this romantic cast. As he grew older he was sent to the High School at Edinburgh and to the College, and he had private tutors at home. In after life he used to hold himself up to his sons as a terrible example of idleness; but this, we know, is no uncommon habit of affectionate fathers, and one which we need not, and perhaps are not intended to take too seriously. Macaulay used to accuse himself of idleness, and I daresay he and Scott were idle in much the same fashion. No doubt his education would not pass muster in these very educated days. He was certainly not a scholar in any language ancient or modern: I doubt even whether he would now be allowed the somewhat loosely applied title of student; but of such studies as jumped with his taste—English literature, for example, and especially English poetry, and the history and antiquities of his own Scotland—he early acquired a mastery that the most laborious of modern specialists could hardly affect to despise. And what he once learned he never forgot. His memory was as prodigious within its own range as Macaulay's or Porson's. But, in fact, from his own writings we get the best idea of that part of his education which

he may be said to have found or made for himself. In the introduction to the third canto of "*Marmion*," and in the opening chapters of "*Waverley*" we see the process by which the little Walter of the Berwickshire farm-house and the young Walter of the Edinburgh classrooms became the great Walter Scott of the world.

For a few years Scott practised the law, but so soon as his father's death left him free to follow his own bent, he escaped from the drudgery of a profession towards which he has described his feelings as being much like those with which Master Slender consoled himself for the loss of Anne Page: "There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased Heaven to decrease it on farther acquaintance." However, Scott's acquaintance with the law was far from a barren one. It gave him two appointments—as Sheriff of Selkirkshire and Clerk of the Session (a position, I believe, analogous to the Registrar or Master of our English Courts), which brought him throughout his life a certain and by no means inconsiderable income; and it proved of great value to him in his work. Some of the most amusing characters in his novels owe their existence to his experience of the law-courts; and Scottish law is moreover peculiarly rich in its vestiges of the old feudal times which had so great a charm for Scott, and may be said to have in more or less degree inspired all his work. And useful as it was to him, his study of the law was not so absorbing as to leave no time for other studies which were more to his taste. He found time for instance to visit all the memorable scenes in his own country, both Highland and Lowland, and to learn their histories. It was in these rambles that he collected the materials for his "*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*," which may be called his commonplace-book, the great storehouse of history and legend from which he drew the inspiration for nearly all his best work. Among the hundred volumes or so which stand to his name

these perhaps most abundantly display the various qualities of his genius. The passion of the past—which was with him no mere romantic sentimentalism but a genuine study—his love of brave deeds, his sympathy with all sorts and conditions of humanity, his untiring industry—for like another great Sir Walter, Sir Walter Raleigh, he could labour terribly when the labour was to his fancy—even his style, in its strength and in its weakness—they are all there, and there in their ripeness. The Scott of “The Border Minstrelsy” is not only the Scott of “Marmion” and the “Lay”: he is also the Scott of “Waverley” and “Old Mortality”, of “The Abbot” and “Redgauntlet”. His favourite companion on these rambles, and staunch friend through life, Robert Shortreed, has left a most amusing account of them, which you will read in Lockhart’s book; but there is one passage in it to which I would specially call your attention. “He was making himself all the time”, the good man told Lockhart; “but he did not know maybe what he was about till years had passed: at first he thought o’ little, I daresay, but the querness and the fun”. In these words lies the heart of the matter: *he was making himself all the time*. If we keep this phrase in our memory, the marvellous fertility of Scott’s genius and his power of production will become intelligible. He had made himself so thoroughly in those early years that when the time came to use them the materials were all ready to his hand; and the hand was ready too.

Scott was twenty-eight years old when his father died in 1799; but before that time he had taken two important steps in life—he had published a book and married a wife. His book was a translation from the German; his wife was a young French lady, Charlotte Carpenter, who had escaped with her mother into England from the French Revolution: a pretty bright good-tempered creature, of no particular character or intellect, but

very fond and proud of Scott, and an excellent housekeeper—which is, of course, an extremely useful quality in the wife of a busy man.

Scott was at this time, and indeed all through his life, as unlike the conventional idea of the literary man as you can well conceive. “You will expect”, he wrote to a lady at the time when “Marmion” had set all England talking of him, “you will expect to see a person who has dedicated himself to literary pursuits, and you will find me a rattle-skulled, half-lawyer, half-sportsman, through whose head a regiment of horse has been exercising ever since he was five years old”. He was tall and well made, very strong and active despite his lameness, expert in all manly exercises, a keen sportsman, a fearless rider, delighting in his dogs and horses and in the hills and the open air—“If I did not see the heather at least once a year”, he told Washington Irving, “I think I should die”. A most charming companion, full of jest and story, of shrewd kindly wit, and sound good sense, too; an admirable talker, yet never talking too much. He was fond of quoting Swift’s pithy lines on the art of conversation—

Conversation is but carving;  
Give no more to every guest,  
Than he’s able to digest;  
Give him always of the prime,  
And but little at a time;  
Carve to all but just enough,  
Let them neither starve nor stuff;  
And that you may have your due,  
Let your neighbours carve for you.

And no one, Lockhart tells us, could have observed them better. In his own house he was the perfection of hosts; and though Abbotsford in its most brilliant days was thronged with visitors from all parts of the world, many of them with no more title to be there than curiosity to stare at a great man under his own roof-tree can give, Scott received them all with the same placid good-temper and politeness. There seems indeed never to have

been such a lion as he was, and certainly never did lion roar so gently. Wherever he was, at all times and in all company, from the fashionable drawing-rooms of London to a peasant's cottage in Liddesdale, he was always the same cheery, honest, unaffected good fellow. The people about Abbotsford worshipped him: "He talks to us", they said, "as if we were all his blood-relations". "I have many friends", he wrote to one of the oldest of them towards the end of his life, "and, I think, no enemies". He was right. I suppose that no man who has ever attained such fame as Scott has ever been so free from the detraction which is a common part of what one, who knew it well, has called "the martyrdom of fame". No one grudged him his honours, not even—which is the strangest point about it!—his own brothers of the pen. Byron and Wordsworth and Southey, who were certainly not lavish in their literary friendships, admired and loved him as sincerely as the rest. No great man of letters was ever so completely free from the whims and affectations which seem by many to be considered the prerogative of genius, or from those ignoble faults which are commonly, and often, I fear, with too good reason, ascribed to members of what has so truly been called the irritable race of poets. None was ever more sincerely modest about himself, or more generous in his praise of others. In a word, he exactly illustrated the truth of Charles Lamb's famous essay—which every young aspirant to literary honours would do well to get by heart—the essay on the Sanity of True Genius.

I daresay you like dates no better than I do, and I will not trouble you with them now. But if we look at the chronology of Scott's writings we shall see that they fall into two nearly equal divisions of time: the poems lying between the years 1796 and 1814, and the novels going on from 1814 to 1830. It is true that he wrote some prose before and some poetry after that year; but 1814 may stand as

broadly marking the time when Scott lit, as though by accident, on what was to prove the truest and highest expression of his genius.

When asked in after years why he had given up poetry, he used to say it was because Byron beat him. And this was in a great measure true. His last poem of any length, "Harold the Dauntless", was published in 1817, by which time the two first cantos of "Childe Harold", and all the brilliant series of poems that followed them—with a rapidity as marvellous as Scott's own—from the "Giaour" to the "Prisoner of Chillon", had been written and read by thousands upon thousands. While this fresh new voice—a voice of far wider compass and deeper note than Scott's—was pouring itself out in such reckless profusion, the world could give ear to no other. But in truth Scott's work had been done in poetry before Byron's had really begun. The two first cantos of "Childe Harold" were not published till 1812, two years after "The Lady of the Lake", and with "The Lady of the Lake" the tale of Scott's poetry had been told. In all the poems that followed we find the same beauties and the same faults repeated, but the faults are greater and the beauties fainter from repetition. Admirable as Scott's poetical genius was within its own range, that range was narrow. He had what Matthew Arnold has well called *the balladist's mind*,—a mind in which a fresh and lively curiosity for the outward spectacle of the world is much stronger than the sense of the inward significance of that spectacle. Some, I believe, think that this was a hindrance to his novels: from that view I venture to differ; but it was undoubtedly a hindrance to his poetry. In poetry we cannot rest our souls on outward things alone. Scott, with his rare good sense and perception, saw this as soon as anybody. "Byron", he said, "hits the mark, where I do not even pretend to fledge the arrow". But if he could not fledge this particular arrow, he had another in his quiver which went

straight home. Like his own banished Douglas,

He bent a bow of might—  
His first shaft centred in the white,  
And when in turn he shot again,  
His second split the first in twain.

As far back as 1805 he had written some chapters of a novel which he had shown to a friend and, on finding them not thought much of, had put away and forgotten all about. These were the first seven chapters of "*Waverley*". It is not certain what his original plan was: indeed he seems rarely if ever to have begun with a definite plan: he could not, he says in his journal, map out a regular plot, much less adhere to it; the idea had to come as he wrote. But it seems most probable that the success of Miss Edgeworth's *Tales of the Irish Peasantry* had suggested the idea of doing something of the same sort for his own country. As soon as he found that his poetical fame was on the wane, his thoughts turned again to these forgotten chapters; and one day, as he was ransacking an old cabinet for some fishing-tackle, he came upon them. He took them out, read them over, thought that perhaps his friend might have judged them a little harshly, set to work on them, finished them off in the evenings of three summer weeks, and on July 7th, 1814, the book appeared anonymously under the title of "*Waverley*, or *'Tis Sixty Years Since*". In the whole range of literary history there is nothing, I suppose, so astonishing as the casual haphazard manner in which this immortal series of novels was ushered into the world.

Until his misfortunes compelled him to declare himself, Scott, as you know, never publicly avowed the authorship of these novels. Many ingenious reasons have been discovered for this secrecy; but he has probably given us the real one when he said it was his humour. In the case of "*Waverley*", no doubt there was a natural unwillingness to risk a reputation already

gained on a new experiment; but with the others, the mystification, such as it was, both amused him and was convenient. It saved him from troublesome questions, and compliments he did not care for; and it amused him to watch the public puzzling itself over the identity of this Great Unknown. But with his familiar friends there was never any mystery; nor indeed would it have been possible for him to hide himself from those who knew him well. The comrades of his youth must have had a hundred memories of those merry days recalled to them; hardly a character he had met, a place he had seen, a story he had heard, but had set his fancy to work in one shape or another. In such tales as "*Guy Mannering*", "*The Antiquary*", "*Redgauntlet*", and "*St. Ronan's Well*", there was enough in every chapter to prove the identity of the author of "*Waverley*" with Walter Scott in any court in Christendom.

What puzzled the general public was the extraordinary rapidity with which the novels appeared. Perhaps in these days this might not seem so extraordinary, when we have grown used to seeing books springing up all round us like mushrooms; indeed I believe there is more than one novelist who claims to have beaten Sir Walter in quantity—though I have not yet heard any claim openly made to be his superior in quality. And there were voluminous authors, too, then—authors wonderfully prolific in that easy writing which, as Sheridan said, makes such uncommonly hard reading. But the least critical reader could not but see that this was an entirely new kind of writing, a kind hitherto unknown in English prose fiction. Scott's great predecessors in that delightful art, Fielding and Smollett and Richardson, had drawn the life around them that they knew, and drawn it with a master's hand. But here was a man who gave you all the pell-mell of life as none had ever given it before, save Shakespeare alone. I do not of course put Scott's genius on a level with



Shakespeare's: to do that would be to liken a bright, brimming river to the great ocean. For one thing, there is the immeasurable difference between poetry and prose: prose at its best is a fine thing: poetry at its best is the consummate expression of the human intellect. And then, one of the many moods of that myriad-minded man Scott never approached. He made no attempt to grapple with the mystery of life: there is no Hamlet in the novels. What Wordsworth has so beautifully called

The heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,

Scott puts by—wisely, in my poor judgment, for such matters have not, it seems to me, their proper place in the domain of prose-fiction. However, we need not discuss this question here; but at least in the vigour and amplitude of his imagination, in the variety of his characters, in the fitness of their words and actions to their situations, in his broad and wholesome view of humanity, Walter Scott, it seems to me indisputable, stands second in English literature to Shakespeare alone. Nor are these qualities shown only in those novels in which he has painted the humours of Scottish life and character. No doubt he is at his best when his foot is on his native heath. There we get his richest humour and his purest pathos, and especially that blending of the two, when the tears are close behind the smiles—as in “The Heart of Mid-Lothian” for instance—in which again he has been surpassed only by Shakespeare, and equalled, I think, only by Cervantes. But when he goes farther back, into distant times and countries not his own, when he draws his materials mainly from books, his hand is no less bold nor his touch less sure. In high and low life he is equally at home. That great critic, Goethe, who had the profoundest admiration for Scott, was especially struck with this quality of sureness in him. “He is equal”, he said, “to his subject in every direction in which it takes him”.

That is so. His Covenanters in “Old Mortality” are as real as his Highlanders in “Rob Roy”: Claverhouse is as compact of flesh and blood as Rob himself. King James in “The Fortunes of Nigel”, Elizabeth in “Kenilworth”, Mary Stuart in “The Abbot”—they breathe and move and speak as surely as Jonathan Oldbuck or Meg Merrilies or Jeanie Deans. His history, too, is wonderfully sound on its broad lines. If what Carlyle has called the mean peddling details get occasionally in his way, so much the worse for them—as it is, you know, with Shakespeare, who makes Hector quote Aristotle and gives Bohemia a sea-coast. Scott was not going to spoil a splendid scene because Amy Robsart was never at Kenilworth, or because Prince Charlie was never in Scotland after he had lost his last stake at Culloden. But in the essential truth of the matter he is never out. And this it is which makes his historical romances something apart and by themselves in fiction, which makes them kin to the historical plays of Shakespeare. “Nothing is so tiresome”, he wrote in his journal—and it would be a good thing if some modern geniuses would condescend occasionally to remember this—“nothing is so tiresome as walking through a beautiful scene with a minute philosopher, a botanist or pebble-gatherer, who is eternally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural picture to look at grapes and chucky-stanes”. Life is not crushed out between the pages of the historian and the archæologist, nor disguised in the scraps of the theatrical dressing-room; it is brought before us fresh

From the dark backward and abysm of  
time,

in all its comedy and tragedy. We seem ourselves to move among those stirring scenes and stand face to face with those famous personages. We ride with Claverhouse through the red rout of Drumclog; we hear the trumpets of Montrose sounding the

charge amid the dark passes of Ben Nevis: we hold our breath as Elizabeth in her fury confronts Leicester with his wronged wife: the wild words of poor conscience-stricken Mary ring in our ears through the vaulted chamber of Lochleven: we see King Jamie grimacing and slobbering, as he cracks his jests with Jingling Geordie; and we watch with Rebecca from the castle-wall how the war gives way before the thundering blows of Richard Plantagenet. We get from Scott's novels, as we get from no others, a sense of public affairs: they are chapters, almost one may say, from the history of the world, full of all the colour and movement of life, of life not as seen in its fireside concerns, to use Lamb's phrase, but as acted on the broad public stage of the world.

How one man, and a busy man, who had moreover nothing of the hermit about him, could possibly produce all these wonderful books along with all his other work in the time that he did, may well, as you can suppose, have puzzled even those who knew him. Scott had of course a wonderful facility of composition. He wrote very fast, and when the subject suited him he undoubtedly wrote best that way; we have seen at what a white heat "*Waverley*" was composed: "*Guy Mannering*", again, in design and construction the best, I think, of all the novels, was the work of a Christmas vacation, by way of what he used to call refreshing the machine, when tired with the routine of the law-courts. He was also a man of very regular habits, and an assiduous observer of his favourite maxim, never to be doing nothing: he had no unconsidered trifles of time; every moment was turned to account, and thus he had leisure for everything. So long as his health permitted he used to work in the early morning, so that by breakfast-time he had, as he expressed it, broken the neck of the day's work. Often these were the only hours he could spare, when Abbotsford was full of company, as it commonly was; and however busy he

might be, when his guests had to be entertained, there was Scott, always ready for them, the gayest of the gay, as though he had nothing in his head but the amusement of the hour, and no more to do with writing books than the youngest and idlest of the party.

But the real secret of the way in which he managed to combine quality with quantity lies in that phrase I have quoted to you: *he was making himself all the time*. One of his friends said once to him, "I know that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen-work; but when is it that you think?" "Oh," answered Scott, "I lie simmering over things for an hour or so before I get up; and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking thoughts—and when I get the paper before me it commonly runs off pretty easily". And in his journal there is a passage in which he contrasts his advantages over the host of imitators that his success had flooded the market with. "They may do their fooling with better grace", he says, "but I, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, do it more natural"; he meant that they had to get their knowledge to write their books, while he wrote his books because he had got the knowledge. He had long ago, in short, made himself so thoroughly that when he sat down to his desk the ideas flowed as freely from his brain as the ink from his pen. "It commonly runs off pretty easily": that it certainly did. I have seen some of his manuscripts, and they are marvels to look at—not exactly marvels of handwriting: indeed in that respect they bear a striking resemblance to certain other manuscripts you may perhaps have heard of by the name of *pænas*. But the wonder of these sheets is that they are written almost wholly without erasures. Page after page the writing runs on exactly as you read it in print. I was looking not long ago at the manuscript of "*Kenilworth*" in the British Museum, and examined the end with particular

care, thinking that the wonderful scene of Amy Robsart's death must surely have cost him some labour. They were the cleanest pages in the volume: I do not think there was a sentence altered or added in the whole chapter. And what is still more wonderful, he could dictate with the same rapidity. Three of his novels, and they are among his best—"A Legend of Montrose", "Ivanhoe", and "The Bride of Lammermoor"—were in great part dictated, the last entirely so, owing to ill-health; but his amanuenses declared that they could hardly keep pace with him. During the progress of "The Bride of Lammermoor" his pain was sometimes such that, strong man as he was, he fairly screamed aloud, but with the next breath he would continue the sentence as though nothing had happened. On one occasion his agony was so great that he was begged to give over till it had passed. "Nay", was the answer. "Only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work that can only be when I am dead."

And never did Scott speak a truer word. He never did give over work till life gave over him. It is probably known to you that he suffered a sad change of fortune in his last years. To explain exactly how it happened would need a clearer head for figures than I ever carried into our mathematical school. Nor is it necessary. It will be enough to say that Scott had himself been rash and extravagant, and had mixed up his affairs with men who had been still more so. His publisher Constable failed, and the failure involved the smaller house of Ballantyne in which Scott had been for many years a partner. He might have taken the advantage the law allowed him and declared himself bankrupt. But this he would not do: no man, he said, should lose a penny through him; if they would give him time the debt should be paid in full. The sum was close upon £120,000, and Scott was fifty-five years old; yet so

strong was the trust in him, so universal the affection and pity felt for him, that it was unanimously agreed to give him the time he asked.

The blow fell at a cruel moment. His wife was dying—she was dead within four months of the bad news; his own health was breaking; his children were no longer round him; the eldest son Walter was married and with his regiment; the second, Charles, had just gone to Oxford; one of his daughters, Sophia, was married to Lockhart and settled in London with children of her own; only Anne, the second girl, was left to comfort him. Yet this brave man addressed himself without a complaint or reproach to his tremendous task. His house in Edinburgh, where he had lived since his marriage, was sold: all the gay life at Abbotsford was stopped: his servants indeed he could not get rid of, for they all refused to leave him, working on diminished wages as happily as ever, and more than ever fond and proud of their master. Never was man in his adversity more amply repaid than Scott for the good deeds of his prosperity. Offers of assistance poured in on him from all quarters, the highest and the lowest, including an anonymous one of £30,000; but he refused them all. "Unless I die", he wrote to Lockhart, "I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one". And in the same letter he tells his friend not to think he is writing "in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune": "My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as ever you saw me, and working at 'Woodstock' like a very tiger". Figures, Lord Beaconsfield is reported to have said, are the most deceptive things in the world except facts; but facts and figures alike show that Scott had made no rash promise to his creditors. Within two years they were paid very nearly £40,000: when he died there remained only £30,000 unpaid; and within fifteen years this sum also was extinguished by the sale of his copyrights. It would of course be unfair

to compare the work done under these conditions with the work of his prime; but we must remember that it included "Woodstock", "The Fair Maid of Perth", and the "Tales of a Grandfather".

This tremendous strain could not last. He had been suffering all through this time under a complication of disorders, and now his brain began to fail. Fortunately this brought also a merciful relief. The fancy took him that he had paid all his debts and was once more a free man. Then, and not till then, he yielded to his friends' entreaties and let them take him abroad to try what rest and change could do for him. They had pressed this on him often, but he could not bring himself to leave the hills and woods he had made his own. One can fancy that the lines he had put five and twenty years earlier into the mouth of the old minstrel must have often come back to him in those days:

By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,  
Though none should guide my feeble way;  
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,  
Although it chill my withered cheek.

Wordsworth, who had paid a last visit to Abbotsford on the eve of departure, wished good speed to his friend in this beautiful sonnet:

A trouble, not of clouds or weeping rain,  
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light  
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple  
height:

Spirits of power assembled there complain  
For kindred power departing from their  
sight;

While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a  
blithe strain,

Saddens his voice again and yet again.

Lift up your hearts, ye mourners; for the  
might

Of the whole world's good wishes with  
him goes;

Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue  
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror  
knows,

Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,  
Ye winds of ocean and the midland sea,  
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope.

But it was too late. Not rest nor change nor the might of the whole world's good wishes could avail him now; and in the next summer, the summer of 1832, they brought him back from Italy to Abbotsford to die.

It would be easy to draw a lesson from Scott's life. The old, old tale of the vanity of human things has rarely had a more striking illustration than that supplied by the sight of this great man, struck down in a moment, in the fulness of fame, wealth and honour, with the dearest wish of his heart destined never to be realized, and dragging out his years in sorrow and labour. And yet Scott never showed himself so truly great as then: admired and loved as he had been in the full blaze of his prosperity, he was never so truly honoured as in the dark shadow of his ruin. The stern moralist may shake his head and remind us that this ruin came from his own faults and from causes unworthy of him. That may be so; but at least, if the fault was his, he met it and atoned for it with a courage and a sense of duty worthy of the highest and purest cause. Lockhart well said that those who knew and loved him would ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have shown itself to the world at large had he never been exposed to the ordeal of adversity. Setting aside his genius, Scott's life, till the trial came, was but the life of any busy prosperous man with a generous nature, a warm heart and a keen relish of life. It was reserved for the dark hour to show the metal he was made of; to leave for his own age and for all ages to come an almost unexampled assurance of that equal temper, to use Lord Tennyson's fine words,

That equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong  
in will,  
To strive, to seek, to find, but not to yield.

MOWBRAY MORRIS.

